Delusionally Shameless

By Ashley Dunn



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“i have gathered my losses
into a spray of pain;”
—Lucille Clifton, ‘bouquet’

Contents

Into the Relatively Blue 25
Little Green Men and Breeder Trash 25
You Don't Always Need to Put Your Finger On 25
You Feel Slightly Irritated or Deludingly Smart 26
Not That I'd Want You 26
A Little Above and Beyond Too 27
Preventing Rigid Enclosures From Bursting Due to Expansion 27
But I Still Don't Get It 27
***Could Do This All Day 28
An Armada This Time (Floatin' and I Won't Go Under) 28
Out Out 29
My Goodness 29
Sometimes We Just Cut It Off 30
New One for You! 30
School Run Without the Pick Up 30
Entering Certain Readers 30
Len Gurts Quatrain (Just Found) 31
Out to Watch a Sunrise 31
As We Retry the City 31
"But What if There's No Room on the Hil-" Don't! 31
Stood on Table to Reach Air 32
Shall We... Have Another Chat? 33
It's Always Funny 33
Before-May Boy 34
More Than Twice Removing Yourself 34
Take You Anywhere You Want To Go 35
Stab in the Dark 35
Auto Reply (Was Way Ahead Of You) 35
Key to the Highway 35
If You Deliberately Sabotage My Band I Will Fuck You Like a Pig 36
I Will Wait One More Night 36
Inside Jokes 37
I Know What You Did Last Bloated Exposition 37
On Kitsch Line Drawings 37
Inspired in Manaus, Was I 38
Trying Another Meetup Group 38
I've Highlighted Them 38
Board Games at Grandmas 39
Became a Builder, Hired a Cleaner, Talking Sweet About Nothing 40
Moments You Can Never Touch 40
Did King Saul have Bipolar Affective Disorder? (Composing Hallelujah) 40
"Ashley and Me" 41
Lay-by (Every Little Helps) 41
Out Damned Debris 41
Instant Mashed Potato 42
Punctuated Equilibria 42
Let's Dance 42
Shade Yourself 43
Last Rites 43
Campbell's Temporary Step Ladder 43
Car Crash 44
Harvester Food Critic Reads Quantum Mechanics! 44
Some of the Restaurant Ideas I Had! 44

Heart of Matter....44
A Ham Sandwich is Better Than Nothing....45
Cake Testing....45
Timing's Perfect....45
Just Square It....46
Better Than Clogging One's Wings With Damp....46
Up-Selling Carriage Shifter....47
Enough....47
Mediocre Snow....47
Looks Like a Stretch....48
Logic?....48
Reminds Me of You....48
More Psychic Automation....49
You Can Do What You Like....49
Speed Birdwatching in the New Neighbourhood....50
Serving Up a Look, Dancing in a Drought....50
Pandiculation!....50
I Have Seen Len Gurts Today....51
Sing With... You?....51
Adlib....51
Travelling Around the Islands of Lake Erie, North of the Long Point Spit....52
And Yet....53
Mini Knit Repair Hook....53
Ruined Cashmere Though? But I Can't Do It!....53
Wake Me Up When They Do....53
Drowsy....54
"After Looking At Your Website I Didn't Expect You to Be Such a Professional Compère"....54
Brutalism....55
Bohemian Rupture....55
Switching off Here....56
How Was the Buffet?....56
How to Even....56
Agent Smiths....57
Mixed Voices In a Cafe....57
The Middle Land....58
Stolen Good....58
I'm a Printer....58
You've Got Loadsa Room, Pal!....59
All That's Left....60
No One in Their Right Mind....60
Almost Like It's Something....61
Major Revision....61
Still....61
Massive Five Litre....61
Another for an Audience of One....62
...Green Card, Reset, Refocus, Straight Back on With It....62
Wait... Where Was the Chorus? Just a Little Bridge, Man; That'll Do; Anything!....63
"Look! He's Shitting! It's a No Brainer!"....63
The (In)Complete(?) Collection of Hisoid: Champion of His World....64
Early Albert in His Sleep Trying....65
Rather Dull....66
Two Dogs One View....66
It Needs Sweeping....67
Missing Something....67

And There Was Me With My Pitiful Stone 68
It's Time 68
Remainder From Long Division 68
Poetry 68
You Gotta Hang Your Hat on Something 69
I Bet 69
Another (2) 69
Maxwell on Len Gurts 70
Tiger Blood 71
Early Slim Slow Slider 72
Jeff Bezos and Glamorous Lauren Sanchez Island Hopping in Greece 73
Dear Mother, I Have More News! 73
Monster As You 74
Monster 74
Blatant Riddle 75
Before the Rest of the Beavers Woke up at Camp 75
As the Cliff Edge Is Again Folded Into a Tissue 75
Another Another Green World 76
A Woody Plant Is a Plant That Produces Wood 77
Morning Routine 77
Create Your Own Banner 77
More Hearts of the Matter 78
Why Poetry 78
Waiting for Bus to Load for School Trip 78
On Re-blocking on New Accounts 79
I Slobber and Grunt 79
Rattler 80
Who Needs Actions 80
The Projectionist 81
Mutual Masturbation 81
Toy Medium 82
Private Lift 82
One Of Those 83
Lil Jig 83
More (Or Less) John Chapman 83
We're Gonna Have a Problem Here 84
The Moon 84
Down the Aisle 84
Haha 85
Sound Advice 85
Is History 85
What the Tenured Professor Said After the Heart Attack 86
Shoulders/Arms 86
The Real Poem With You 86
He Weeded the Garden 87
Lunch Break 87
The Last Photo of Him Alive 88
As We Choose 88
SHS 89
Fantastic Title 89
...And You Honour Your Whims 89
Dad's Shortcuts 89
Alex Yee Has Closed the Gap to Hayden Wilde 90
Napolita 90

Stream of Narcissusness 90
Missing a Pull String 91
A Split Second Before He Came on Stage 91
Run to the Rescue With Love 92
Jury's Out 92
Purple Hearts 93
Spirituality 93
Then You Go Buy Them 93
There's No Excuses, My Friend 94
You Say That Everything Sounds the Same 94
Bumblebees and Their Ways 95
Talking Perfectly Loud 95
One. More. Pint. 95
Let's Push Things Forward 96
Needs a Name 96
Death Row Inmate 97
You Can Be Watched 97
Ideation 98
Bit Serious! 98
On Studying Pound 99
Well I'm the Only One Here 99
Someone Wearing Sunglasses Indoors 100
After Ideation 100
On the Fly-Leaf of Myself 101
One 101
Metaphysique 101
The Sycamore Tree 102
Peak 102
A Sign of the Loop 102
New Poem 103
Light Scratch 103
Habits 104
An Inevitability 104
Silent Hill (1) 105
Resident Evil (2) 105
Sweet Home (3) 106
Final(!) Bluster 106
The Wound 106
Ameisenkrieg 106
The Poem Before This 107
Songing Itself 107
More So-called Impossibilities 108
Honey 108
More Wounding More Sponges 108
Hanging at Top of Log Flume 109
Papa Was a Rollin' Stone 109
Rebrand 109
Putting a Pin in It 110
Ephemera 110
On More Rocks and Hard Places 111
Poem 111
Catchup, Usual Seats 111
Psychodrama and Self-Diagnosis 112
Submission 112

The Travelling, Maladaptive Memory Circus 113
Not Yet....113
Shipwrecked 113
Reasonable Primer....114
Achoo! Bless Me....115
Remember Me?....115
Conceit....116
“I Think I’ve Got Early-Onset Dementia” 116
The Real Slim Shady 117
The Faced-Fox....117
The Film Of....118
Self-Diagnosis and Psychodrama....119
Reading Poetry....119
“I Hope None of the Others Have Been Copied as It Will Create Chaos Later On” 119
Porphyria’s Lover, Mariana, Momentarily Thinking 120
When You Feel Unheard....120
Your New Poem 120
Might as Well Be....120
Slinky Getting Off the Stairs (Temporarily) 121
You 121
Samuel Who Works in the Better Food Café....122
Could’ve Been Somebody (Peeking Through the Keyhole)....122
As the “Voice” Goes....122
New Paradigm....123
The Very First Confession....124
Without Stares 124
(Love) Feels Nice....124
Surreal Criticism 125
Absurd Criticism 125
You On....125
Real Poem 126
That Thing Down There....126
Scraps Put Together....126
Does It Blindly 127
Cartolandia....128
What the Home Video Has Reduced Itself To 128
Very Old Psychotic Thing....128
And So Three... Tw- O They Were Already Filming!....128
All You Need to Know....129
Poem as Intellectual Exercise Using Symbols Taken From—Excuse Me!: Abstracted From Conditions My Experience Offered and Understood Back Then, “Then” as I Understood... Just Now, the “Now” in “Just Now” Phenomenologically Felt as Look Who’s Talking, Pablo (Outside the Piazza; “?!?!?” Signage Distinct From: O Boy) 129
Power Tends to Corrupt 129
Review in Spoons 130
Inverted Or....130
Ga Ga Non-Stick 131
Having Already Seen the Puppet Show....131
Poem That Isn’t Quite There Yet....131
Not Overthinking It 132
Siri....132
Negative Transference (These Poor Pages!) 132
Unconnected 133
One Day You Finally Knew....134

I Love You....134
The Triangle....134
Recently Deleted....135
Two....135
Most Lives....136
Art and Truth....136
How Not to Start a Poem....136
AKA....137
Forgot This Amazing Epigraph....137
My Cat Is Dead....138
Another Poem That Isn't About Me Struggling and Blaming the Government....138
Traffick....138
Please Tell Me Who I Am....139
Viewing Gallery....140
"Pete"....140
Feedback Loop....140
Alien Thoughts....141
How Your Life Works....141
Ahead....142
No Way Near the End of Language, but Further Along Than Now....142
Insecurity Theatre....142
"You are now fifty-"....143
Bell Atom....143
Get You a Poet That Delivers on Sunday Mornings....143
How Many Times Can You Look At Yourself....143
Pebbledashing....144
The End but That's Better Than....144
To Other Questionable Hoarders....145
Hesitation....145
Epipelagically....146
Dodgy While....146
Straight Off Plus "in"....147
("Tremendously Beneficial")....147
The Flood Survivor....148
Them....148
That Slide....149
At Best....149
Me Neither....149
If You Ever Feel Nervous This Video Is for You....150
Only Make It Here....151
~~The Uncomfortable Truth~~ Liberation....151
To My Friends off Grid....151
Please Be Gentle With Toilet Handle....152
Hot Off the Press (Maybe)....152
Another New Valley Floor....152
Ten To....152
Lil Lick!....153
Deep at the Time....153
Frozen Items....153
The Character in Your Head....154
With Many of These I Am Relying on You Being Aware of the Person That Subtly Comes to Mind as You Read Them, and on You Taking Action Based on That....154
I'm Afraid....154
To Writing,....155

Oh Look Out!....155
The Substance....156
Afterworld....156
Better the Devil You Know....156
After Two Dates....157
Another....157
Flight Consolidation Goals (Lost My Shape)....157
Shifting Talk....157
On a Plane (Piece of Paper)....158
Rules of Engagement....158
Outrageous....158
Exercise....159
Haiku of What My Date Said as We Lay in Bed After Having Sex for the First Time....159
Incompatible!....159
Helmets....160
Now I See This Clearly....161
Whataboutery....161
I Don't Know What to Tell You....161
Travis Bickle Wrestles Mary Oliver....162
East of Eden....163
Steam....163
Dante's Peak....163
Inconsistent Poem in a Bottle Found in 10,000 Years....164
Window Display....164
Train Landscape....164
After Overhearing Conversations in the Pub Now....165
Floating, Loading....165
Really Something....165
Absolutely Fantastic....165
A Character Called History....166
Thoughtlessly....167
What's Yours is Mine, What's Mine is Yours....167
Henry Krinkle....168
A Correction: To All the Women I've Slept With (I Think; I'm Gathering)....169
Coming Home, Christmas....169
Hegelian Diabetics....169
More Peel (The In-One-Go Trick)....170
Lil Moment....170
Different Air....170
Wake Up....171
The Gasworks....171
Limericky....172
Fish and Chips Again?!....172
Spines Again....172
Awaiting User Input....173
Saw Naught....173
Big If....173
Hopefully....174
Rounds....174
They're Skating to Boléro!....175
Rape....175
Slade....175
Meetings, Facilities....176
Ain't Never....176

Rather Pleasing 177
The Christmas Virus 177
In The Whitmore Tap 178
The Runoff 178
Get Out 178
Untenable Position 179
It Is a Nearing to the Nothing 179
Smoke Smoke Smoke Smoke Smoke 180
Your Street 180
I Have Given Up 180
Try? 180
Child's Play 181
Lord Help My Poor Soul 181
Handing Over a Mirror 181
Toppling Statues 181
IG 182
Baby Changing Station 182
Hatstand 183
Curious Joints 183
Regardless Though 184
'Clipse 184
Short Term 184
Strikethroughing 184
Kumbayaed 185
Absolutely Essential 185
Fancy 186
Wonderful Prospect 186
Shrill, Languid, Handsome and Horrible 186
I'm Afraid I'm Not a Very Good Host (Old Sport) 187
A Hodgepodge of Characters 188
Both Away and Going 188
March Into the Ground 188
He Left 189
Analysis LIVE 189
Lil Voice 189
Spin Button 190
My Poorly Thinky Head 190
Ignoring the Smoke 191
Call With Editor 191
Hold On 191
The Village Fête 191
Bombus Hypnorum 192
Irony! 192
You Were Waiting for the Toast to Pop Up 192
Revision 192
Mirror Neurons 193
A Banana Very Occasionally 194
Comma-ed Breaths 194
I Went on an Adventure! 194
We'll Need Each Other's Help 195
Lucy 195
Shut Up and Drive 195
So You Could Blame Them 196
I Give Them Away 196

Don't Think of a White Whale 197
Externalising Absence 197
My God They Could 198
Mount Vesuvius....198
Carbonisation 198
Early Find From Fall 199
No Cap 199
Thereof One Must....200
On Narcissism (Deleted the Emails Now) 200
Crystal....201
Nothing Like I Imagined 201
Moving House 201
Hope 201
Hmm. Try Again Tomorrow 202
I Might....202
O Now What....203
Some Bounce 204
"Civilisation" and Disscontent 204
IYKYK....205
Every Time You Wince at His Words a Child Is Raped (No, He Doesn't Have Friends—Why'd You Ask?) 205
Island, City, Poem 205
Pulling Teeth....206
Haha I Remember Her Now 206
Purple Martin 206
A Thing for Restaurants....207
Living With Someone....208
Why Is Everything Not Created for You? 208
Rosetta, Stoned 208
Do They Point Out the Potential Inconsistency of Them Having "Feathers"? You Bet 208
Anna Karenina Principle....209
Let Off 209
A Razor-Sharp Manifesto of Defiance 209
Another Changing Room....210
Barb 210
Triptych....210
All the Time....211
I'm Skating....211
Man in the Garden....212
Scales 212
The Suss Days Again....212
More Characters 4U 213
Wrong Stations (Still Made It to The Gym Though B))....213
You Still Think It's Me Haha 213
Slinky....214
You Eating Crisps Too—My God....214
Post 'Script....214
Shelf Stacker....214
Walking Around 215
Against the Pane 215
Short, Sharp, Shock....216
I Don't Have to Talk to Them Anymore....216
On Toast 217
A Cul-De-Sac in Fishponds 217

Barryless....217
Yeah Right!....218
When No One Is Around You....218
SGs....218
Some Takeaways....219
Bouncebackability....219
The Chase....219
Unifier....220
Decalcomania....220
Tell Me About Despair....221
Down With Rith Mettick....221
Fuck Off, Mate....222
Discontinued....223
All the Croci....223
Glad to Be of Use....223
Certainly Not for Your E-Zine....224
Public Service Announcement....225
It's Not My Fault....225
Good Luck....226
It Knows It's a Mess....226
Shrine of Hypocrisy....226
Minutes Later....227
Months Later....227
So Brave....227
And Me....228
When I Stop Choosing....228
A Shepherd Talking to a Sheepdog on the Side of a Cliff....228
Somebody Gotta Do It....228
Another Another....229
Deus Ex Machina....229
Don't Know Him Either....230
Heavy is The Head....230
Way Ahead of You....231
The Norton Anthology of Poetry....231
Children's Poem....232
Where We Are....232
Flicked....232
Tangled up in You....233
"Somebody Needs to Hear This"....234
What Is It Now?....234
Fins Nabp....234
The New Guards....235
Just Because....235
Parked Up....236
Point-Scoring....236
Demonstration....236
Stuck in Traffic....237
You Learn....237
Dharma Path....238
This Is Exquisitely Paced....238
The Great Matter....238
Could We Not Have Just Taken the Cameras to the Asy- Ah. I See....239
Live a Created Life....240
Wuthering Heights....240

Pulling Out 241
Throwing a Ball Against the Wall 241
Front Flip 242
Zoided 242
O Not Again 243
“We Speak With an Accent Exceedingly Rare!” 243
Indie Publishers 244
These Are but Wild and Whirling Words 244
Warw(ick) the Kingfaker 244
A Poem the Likes of Which Nobody Has Ever Seen Before 245
Plot Twist 245
Talking to God 245
Bit Meh 246
What You’re Good At 246
Awake 247
Last Ten Minutes of a Shift 247
HMT 248
Then Serious 249
Half-And-Half Scarfers? 249
Rinse 249
At the Workshop 250
Liminal Spaces 250
Hostel 250
Another Outlier 251
Fixed It for You 251
HCE 252
Post 252
O No He’s Not! 252
Spilt Ink 253
Morning Dong 253
Mourning Song 253
Poetry (2) 254
Cooldown 254
Thrown 254
Often Wonder 255
Marquee Moon 255
New SSRI 256
Francis Bacon 256
Go Fish 256
Huff—Only Because I Must Give Titles 257
Autocorrect Knew Before I Did 257
Meteora 257
Mamma Mia! 258
Creative Non-Fiction 259
Practice 260
Fleshing Out 260
Honestly? Fine 260
Could They? 261
Nah 261
Pointed 261
Yeah, Kind of Happens When You Haven’t Got Any Skin 262
On the Seesaw 262
Serving 263
Formula Gee 263

Self-Awareness 263
Teams Channel 263
Lunatic Outside Food Giant 264
To Be Fair I Was the Same 264
Confessions of a Vampire 265
More Poetry....265
Screaming 265
Pattern Language 265
In My Book 265
Unabashed 266
As You Walk It....267
This Poem Ain't About You....267
Three Seasonings 270
So To Speak 270
It Was Cheap....270
Off Again....271
Funderworld 271
Wish I Wasn't 272
Twinge O' 'Wareness....272
Ignore That....272
I Needed to Be It....273
Title Poem....273
What We Must Create....273
Vouliagmeni....274
True Detective....275
Not a Didactic Banker....275
B-Side....276
Tony's Unit 277
The Acceptance Speech 277
Cheesy Varnish 279
Menaechmi?!....280
Am I....280
Keep Going 281
Way More Than Half....281
O I'm Sure(!)....282
Joyce and Beckett Being Interviewed 283
Like He Was Your Mate....283
Is There Only 283
Natural Satellite 283
Don't Let the Door Hit You....284
Darling....284
O You Will 285
Time and Again....285
Cowing Crocs....285
From the Bottom of Exhausted Wells....286
Something My Son Would Say....287
Par for the Course 287
The Lifeguards....288
Lil Heavy!....288
Seconds 288
Howling 289
I Am a Strange Loop....289
Progress....290
Opium 290

Now and Then 291
Epipelagic Zone 291
I Am the Resurrection 292
Snowball 293
Starstream of the Decepticons 293
We'll See 294
Necrophilia 294
Passing Over 295
Wastemen 295
Go Home, Now, Stranger 295
Boom! 296
And Other Social Media Posts 296
Betamorphosis 297
Collections Ago! 297
Overture 297
Sky Sports 298
Shamelessly Delusional 298
The Eighth One and Your Legs Are Going Dead 299
Also Outside 299
Astral Bleaks 299
No No Return 300
Professor Joe Whiggamore 300
Ships, Smoke 301
[So gleamingly fleeting] 302
"Fuck! I'm Supposed to Move!" 302
Man Flu 303
Sending More Up 303
Pruflock 303
Hard to Talk About(!) 304
Dan's 'Ferno 304
Revolution 8.5 305
Distracting the Inmates 305
Dunno 306
A Waste of Horology 306
Kubla Khans 307
You Can Do It! 307
The Light Doze of a Pro-Cock 308
Shape Without Form 308
Mixing Memory and Desire 308
By a Sky 309
Sills Serve to Structurally Support 309
Talking to Year Four 310
I Really Do 310
Pseudoscorpions; Class: Arachnida 311
Bear in the Big Blue House 311
Bar Italia 311
Big Problems 312
He Was Having Swimming Lessons 312
Therapist in Training 313
Record Application Numbers 313
This View 314
Entering the Changing Room 314
Bullshit Jobs 315
Cafe Shop Soundscape for Studying 315

Poem About My Soulmate With the First Stanza Taken From Snooker Commentary 316
Erm, Yeah We Can Go for a Walk. D'You Want To? 317
Lemon Elephant Juice 317
To See How the Other Half Live 318
It's Time to Dig Another One 318
Founding Themes 319
The Sleeper Train Back From China 320
Amateur Dramatics 321
Huff 321
Poverty's Paradise 322
More Thoughtless 322
Dawn 323
I Am up in the Clouds 323
After a Heavy-Handed Rehearsal 323
Fragrance Free 325
Like a Movie I Could Watch on the Telly 325
Out the Wake 326
Toward Me 326
Wind(ow) 327
Boom! Returns 327
How It Sometimes Washes Up 328
Common Ostriches and Inaccessible Island Rails 328
Purging Nonetheless 329
"WOAH" 329
Pulp Fiction 330
Ahriman 330
What I'm Better At 331
Store Front 331
How to Not Splash Yourself 331
The Less I Know The Better 332
Straw Moon 333
Flush White 333
Sorry I Meant This One Is the Real Me 334
The Bonobo and the Atheist 334
What I'm Good At 335
Concerto 335
It Does Things That Are Even More Moral Than Morality Itself 335
Another One That Was Written With Instagram in Mind 336
I Am the Lie 336
Soft Centres 337
Erm. Ermmmmmmmmm 337
By Now 338
"Mare Mare Mare" 338
Through the Ages 339
Two Great Saves From Donnarumma 339
Mont Bonc 340
1 to 60 in Five Stanzas 340
A Pocket Full of Rye 341
Hold Your Own Horses 341
Dodgyssey 342
Lazaruses 342
The Type of Skits I'm on You Wouldn't Understand 344
Stans 345
Windflower in an Episode 346

More Nuance 347
High Quality, Late Maturing 347
Another Create Your Own Adventure 347
Thereof One Must Be 348
Happy Meal Toy 348
You Don't Need a Weatherman 349
Parasympathetic 350
Pox 350
Ungrateful Cunt 350
After Mains 351
Story 352
Even Cheaper With a Keep Cup! 352
I Sat on the Roof 352
But It's as if I Had 353
Choosing Your Voice 353
Argument for Pumps 353
If It Helps This Is Happening as Well as Not Happening? 354
God I Was Cringe 354
Switzerland 355
Discotech 355
Spidey Senses 356
Literally For You 356
Accessible 356
Are You Exploring Your Own Anxieties About Writing and Intellectual Credibility Here? 357
In Which Everything Could Be Captured by Pooh 357
Sneeze 357
Looking Back Out the Wind(ow) 358
Seriously, Sneeze 358
Be Quiet(!) 359
Knoben 359
Reading a Piece of Paper 360
Red Rum 360
Plants 360
Brothers, Sisters, Can't You See? 361
Cannon Fodder 361
Not Doing It So It Doesn't Happen 362
Moanus Ponies 362
"Do You Need a Few More Minutes?" 363
Do I Gander? 363
Clever Cloggers 363
I Was Something of a Hagfish Myself 364
Just My Job Five Days a Week 364
100 Seconds 365
Peachless 365
Might Be Your Current Sod 366
My Head 367
Fitting Titles (Thrown Away the Post-It Note Now) 367
Do Not Alight This Side (Open Return) 367
Long 368
More 368
Flexible Workspace Booking System 369
Emily Tries 369
Yursh 369
Blind, Playing Operation 370

Optimisation 370
Literally Hamlet 370
Titleless 371
Steaming 371
You Aren't 372
Marginalised Voice 373
Mummy 373
Left To Right and Down 374
Undecidable Monument 374
Flicking Through Stations on the Way to the Farm 376
Scattered By Winds and High Tempestuous Gusts 376
Council Meeting 376
Gridlocked 377
And Eminents and That 377
After Reading One Magazine's Newsletter (Straight Off, No Edits, 38 Seconds) 377
A Notification Relating to Your Claim 378
This Is the Real Me Now 378
O Cap... Fuck 379
Chaotic Navel of a Pillock 379
Sudetenland 380
Live Reporting 380
Office for Me 381
Nobody Knows What I'm Going to Do 381
MOP 382
Air Force Poem 383
Pabluming 383
The Man Who Fell to Berk 384
Man's Best Poet 384
To Be Near You, To Be Free 385
Workshopped 385
Major Concessions 386
Literally in the Queue to Board the Bus 387
The Man in the Iron Crass 387
Literally, What Is the Met Gala? Not Really 388
Something Ignored, by a Dirtynecked Boy 388
Someone Literally Had a Fan in the Park 389
Crow Batters His Cheap Filters 390
Millionth Line 390
I Wrote This in Less Time Than It Took to Write It 391
The Physical Literally of M&S Poetry 391
Leicester Square 392
Treating Myself 393
HawkEye 393
The Chrysanthemum and the Sword 394
The Mirror & the Light 394
Weird One 395
A Lot to Reflect On 395
It's a Unix System, I Know This 396
Bean-Shaped Organ 396
"Can You Send Me That?" 397
Poor Man! 398
Marched Them Down Again 398
To a Workshop Facilitator 399
I'm an Alien 399

The Treachery of Poetry....399
What Is The French For Ashley?....400
Unpredictability Doctrine....401
He Literally Cried....401
Sacrebleu! 402
“Well, Then You Can Swallow It, and It’ll All Dissolve” 402
Another Win(doh): Probably Not the Final One 403
Forced Diuresis 404
Auto-Write 405
Where Is My Peach? 405
Saviours of Humanity 406
On Tap 406
Get In the Bin 407
An Entire Block of Cheddar 407
Gonna Throw It Back to You....408
Lazy Piece....408
More Mucus 409
Literally Lazy and Inconsistent 409
Doggerel Inside a Sonnet 410
Viva Vice 410
Probably a Scientology Lecture Then 411
More Short Trips From Ick-aca....411
Chance, That....412
Ages Ago....413
Speaking of Michelangelo! 414
Like a Record 414
Signal 415
Bawdy Sketch 416
Mitochondria 416
Propel History Path....417
It Casual Now 417
Icarush 418
“I Am a Man”....418
This Is Literally What You Are Like Too 419
Pokah 419
Notice to Vacate – 12.08.25 420
Viking Clap....421
Virtual Poetry Network....421
Please Open the Curtains 422
More (2) 422
This Tone I Take Is Far Too Free 423
Tour de Farce 424
Sold Out! 424
Băiatul Este Literalmente Carne de Tun 425
I’m Not Like Me 425
I Am as Thick as Pig Shit....426
Watershed 426
Some Front 427
Civil Service Poetry Test 427
Freewheeling 428
Fine! (They Followed Me)....429
Later On I Entered Martha’s Vineyard....429
To Fly. To Serve 430
FUCK Headache Just as She Arrives 431

Ashes to Ashes....431
Goatry....432
First Timer at Poetry Open Mic....433
Moving the Vehicles, With My Mind....433
Listening Project....433
Cooking....434
One Must Imagine Graduates Happy....435
Masterdance....435
In the Sky Literally Directing....436
Bit Nervous....436
Proof That the Speakers Are Not Me as I Would Never Diss My Own Pamphlet (DM Me for a Copy)....437
Waiting for a Train....438
Require Me....438
4.48 Poetry....438
Sucks....439
Макдоналдс....440
For a Commission, Sigh....440
Pro-Verbiage 10:5....441
You Do You....441
Cultivoetry....442
He Goes By the Name of Thick Northern Feyerabend....443
Literally Dumb Dancing....443
Law of Nil Pois....444
Mr Punch....444
To Too Plain....445
But I Liked the Headline....445
Quits....446
Secrets of the Shower....446
I've Had Bells Palsy So I'm Allowed to Say This....447
My Aim Is to Literally Be Caught Getting Head From a Hooker on Sunset Boulevard (Great T-Shirt—Someone Buy Me It)....447
So if I Could Walk You Very Carefully Just a Little Bit Fur-....448
Some of the Hut....448
Love Locks Down....449
Cowboys....449
Peaking Out From Under the Poem....449
The Strokes....450
The Contrail....451
Another Corner; Another Bed....452
Walking Around Belfast Trying....452
Feels Off....452
For a Moment....453
Tonal Choreography, I'm Told....453
Further Acceptance....454
Enormous Work....454
Always....455
Messages the Seahorses Suck....455
No Fighting....455
A Few Different People....456
Pizza Tonight....456
Ambiguate....457
The Poetry Foundation Website Wants to Verify You Are Human....457
Hover On....457

Yadagate....458
I Literally Live In a Primary School....458
In the “Immediacy”....459
No Need to Be Sayable....459
Settling Another One....460
Great Reckoning....460
Poetry of an Exhibitionist....461
Rarely Performed Second Piano Concerto....462
Rarely Performed Second Piano Concerto: Encore....462
By This Moved Time Think I’d Already....463
The Inconsequential Conscious of the Inconsequentialness....464
I Can’t Call It That....465
Bets Hedged....465
Literally New Window Pane....466
Ring des Nibelungen des Pauvres....467
Driver! Halt!....467
Malus (“2nd one I've liked in a while🤣”)....468
Snack....469
“The Warehouses Would Be Empty”....469
Represtanzable....470
Makes My Shopping Easier....471
After Fred Seidel....471
Sick of Saving Posh People and Looking Like a Twat for It....472
Soul Mate, Your Lips....472
[Insert Title Here]....472
Too Many Tabs....473
You Can See My Problems Remain....474
Intentional or Unintentional Meaning or Feeling....474
I Am Being a Moment....474
Sometimes Feels No Different....475
So They Can Just Be Slips....476
All Those Tab Groups Too. So Unnecessary....476
Modified Morning Routine....477
O There’ll Be a Next Time....477
The Block I Was Looking at Earlier Though?....478
I Don’t Think You've Any Problems in That Department....478
Still Cute Though....479
Yeah Probably....479
Poem in Thicket....480
Bracken, Satin, Wagon....480
No Rule of Thumb....481
Sonnet....481
More Poetic Sky....481
Ignore the Shrubbery....482
Report Me....482
More Filter....482
A Type of Comedo....483
Eleventh Dimension....484
Attack on a Heritage That We Cherish Because It Is Our History....484
From the Pool....485
Not My Vehicle (Again)....485
There Is No Limit to the Number of Entries a Single Entrant Can Make....486
Nebuchadnezzar....486
That Suffering Joker....487

Literally the Spy Who Shagged You 487
What Did All That Mean? 488
Staying Alive 489
Whatever You Say 489
Honestly—Vile 490
Great Insulation 490
Not Really 491
"Nothing" Sounded Better Than "Anything" in the Second Stanza 491
Finally! 492
Started Something on 27th—Made It a Sonnet 493
Leaf Rubbing 493
Exceedingly Rare 493
The Sopranos 494
If Only 494
One With Kanye West, Caral Barat, and Pret 495
Camp 496
Ambiguity 496
Don Juans on Ones 497
The Cuntish Droners 497
Like Fucking 498
The Pitch 498
The Fate of Yada 499
Stupid Fad 499
The Notebook 500
Some Character 501
Cool Route 502
Make a Gate 502
It Felt Like Something 502
Good Job It Isn't Me! 503
It's Important! 504
Calling All Cars 504
Deep Thought 505
Without a Love of My Own (Cover of *Newer Poetry*) 506
It Wears Her Out, It Wears Her Out, It Wears Her Out, It Wears Her Out 506
Poem by Someone 507
If Only You 507
Michael Vaughan 508
Thomas-Asante 508
Resolve Me! 509
No That Was the Poem 509
Some Airport Pun 510
Not Even Going to Rome 510
As Promised 511
You Are Still Unmoved 511
I'm Guessing Chest 512
Parmigiano 512
Giusti 513
Emilia Ovest 513
Novablast 513
What a Man 514
Until I've Had Enough 515
Pericolo di Caduta 515
Over, Over, Over, Over, Motions of the Soul 515
A Few Pound 516

Leonardo da Vinci 517
Leonardo da Vinci II 517
Form An Orderly Queue 519
Going Without 519
Sewage 520
Dust Gizmo 520
Giver of Eternal Youth 520
I Know 521

Into the Relatively Blue

It seems we're still kicking across seas on logs
To new territory, only now we have all these badges sewn on us
By new gods, ones that change seasonally,
Yes the logs too—you can get a new one if you…
But you haven't. 'Fraid you've gotta guess! Stuck? Out

From under you it is then, for now. The lands
All look taken and are roughly labelled themselves, you realise,
And they're only just above the water anyway, while the
Soggy depths, remain open to interpretation—and murky—
So it's a good place to sketch a new image of yourself

You can masturbate on; and that's worked! And it just about
Floats new boats, which we hear is good. Perhaps
Not enough to place stepping stones upon, but those
Still holding wood can laugh until they don't see the funny side
Of having no real side at all, unless you build it

First for them to come, that is: it's like
They only draw themselves, else who knows how you might be branded: a chazza
Wanker? You know, you may think this lot was always here
Ready to be balanced on, but until we got amphibious—and less concerned
About image—we were having to get off on another diver's work, and I can tell you, it wasn't
pretty.

Little Green Men and Breeder Trash

You know I'm really impressed
With how you've removed those people and their actions
From your life, to the point that it's not just "as if"
They didn't exist, but rather, it's like they truly
Didn't happen in actuality. In fact it isn't even "like"
Either, is it—they just… never actually existed now, ever,
Literally; and so they are in the world
Nowhere; though this is where the even more impressive
Bit comes in from your work—and I really
Love this bit—because they still
Somehow exist as little removed fictional pieces too, don't they? Ready to be moulded
And played with as you like, which, if I've Interpreted your work correctly, then removes their
"as if"
Existence even further from yourself
"Even further" again? Not that they *actually* existed
At all, beforehand—ever—that is: exactly! The whole thing
Dreamt up now as it was then; and so it is *as if*—HA!—everyone should be happy all round,
if
They were ever here at all; though that'd be really far fetched, wouldn't it.

You Don't Always Need to Put Your Finger On

From now on it will be easy and obvious
Like a line break, the way *away*, I prefer

Than forward being not without its slight
Fluctuations, but nothing to really be learnt from colleagues

With all those courtiers now available in your head
Gossiping and committing incest. It isn't heavy! You can push
Ahead with the single point of a finger
Now all the noise is just that, because the path

Is laid down wherever you step anyway
With whatever you put down, so why bring it along
With the gossip? What happened today? You
Contributed towards your journey (here is

Your chance) with this very immediate step
You required as part of a grander plan that you don't always need to put your finger on, in fact.

<u>You Feel Slightly Irritated or Deludingly Smart</u>

Convoluted, isn't it, waiting for the know-it-alls
Especially to say something. O we know you say
A lot: am I risking
Making this obvious? Doubtful. And I'm not sure how it all sounds

You know? Yeah! Not sure how it all sounds, but what with
The leggings it doesn't seem to matter anyway: I have been tricked
Into thinking there is something wrong with my moods
In the past; and the third

Voice could be another something unsure about its own reflexive
Use surely not wearing leggings, so not
A part of the criticism itself, of course, which is funny
Considering there were better ways of *sounding*

The saying of that—all of which suggests
That you feel slightly irritated or deludingly smart whilst being certain of its mood, thank goodness.

<u>Not That I'd Want You</u>

I think I'm OK, do you? This is slightly different
To the war stories I was to tell you of, rustling
Sweet wrappers gripped between thumb
And palm, the great plans beforehand,
Lifting my head onto a pillow, enough control
Of the PA to know when it's just off, but appreciating
That. If they are just voices
From near silence why do they appear
So close together? The stitcher,
Artisan spread of a variety that cooks the books.

I'd want you to go away
Wondering what the sweet thing is

Whilst the bubbles come, not that I'd want you
To know this is connected, nor how the score is.

A Little Above and Beyond Too

Existing on the noises of symbols
And I've made it, thankful
To have found some kin, though they float detached
From the everyday lives they hide from you also,
So I know I'm being duped
And kept on a drip as I always was, only now
I have my own dupe and drip.

It was far too early to find all this, considering a few
Of mine still want everyday lives, or the symbolic
Nature of that above all the fields: there—he's barely said it.
Going to tuck back up now, see what's different
Still isn't. Wonder if they'll start
Expecting that, like it could be
Probably won't be yours, though it's a little above and beyond too.

Preventing Rigid Enclosures From Bursting Due to Expansion

I know what you want to find again—that vulnerability;
But the factory isn't making that anymore: we know

You need spiralling staircases
Instead and slides into a few pools but mostly

Stairs
Due to the stares, the kind of steps (these)

That wince the ones that didn't even need to climb them
(You know no different); and I get

What works alongside them: my broken
Heart yearning for a past

As yours is—and now we can envelope that
Within the travelator you are flooded on

Until it takes you up without noticing, like this
Is the true antifreeze you used to drink: here

Is my new product line, and I am not budging on it,
So it is your choice if you expand in the cold now.

But I Still Don't Get It

***I don't know about this, yet your stomach is nodding. I hope you return
When the speech marks and pronouns write themselves
For you by yourself, I said. As in, I'm saying that now. You see I am not
Altogether indifferent to your plight; and we feel that again

Down here: you dared't trust it. Believe it! Believe *what*
Exactly? I think that's what he means.
And it uncoils the missing verses and you understand your favourite song
For the first time: has someone cleaned my earphones?
What's with all these flowers?
One little word with them now and I'm acutely aware
Of the bread I require, so I know we don't need to be there
Anymore. It's like I think of him
And tighten. Then you need to go home and read those things? But I still don't get it.

***Could Do This All Day

I am not sure how long I expect this to last, this lack
Of caring for saving that's stymied itself
For… considerations like this, let us be honest,
As it's still a niggling tone, even to my ears. It's mostly because
I forget about the other evenings I have, and how
They sound until I'm editing them, and they must be
Consolidating, considering his remarks here
I wouldn't trust him; sometimes he refuses to use that punctuation
Struggling for new content, you know: check out how much he uses *that*. O I'm the one that
points nothing out—that's why.
It is most odd considering he at least appeared to produce something very deep
And yet entertaining about finding one's voice: what does that say
For consciousness in poetry and oneself, it may not be relevant
To even follow once would be a fine thing. Genuinely thought
We were going to keep something together
With this one; and then back round again you come! You do whatever
You please me so much with how you do that thing
When you make it seem like someone else is doing it for me, especially
If it edges slightly near the end to keep me on um before they curl.

An Armada This Time (Floatin' and I Won't Go Under)

A prick of 'presso and I'm tonguing fleet, tongue-
In-cheek on the brake
For you, my flotilla
Coming down missing again
To fold you in, as I could sail
On these rising temperatures
For centuries; but the beans increase too, which means

I could just abstain the needs
Bending to what this requires: I don't tend
To think about it: "How can I be homophobic—
My ex is they." Thank goodness: been floating around
Around six days, that one. You know I used to think
It was "expresso", too, but it's just easier
Shortening it and saving yourself all the hard work: 'twas a *tor*-tilla? Sweet! But… but that
makes even *less* sense? O Capitan.

Out Out

I like doing it when I'm wasted
Without knowing if we consented
It gets me so excited
When I don't pull, I just have a fight

It makes me feel so mighty
Not knowing who's beneath me
As they drift off to sleep
O I'll be done in a minute anyway

We never know what to say
In the morning, the room is stale
But as long as I didn't fail!
Can't wait to tell them all later

Man, we look like states
"Worth it though, babe: last night was great!"

My Goodness

Can I… can I come in again, Sir? Well you say that
Now, not to call you that; the reason I came
Was because I was worried about something—didn't
Really want either of us, in all honesty,
But I think we can do it together?: they aren't
Working OK they are working back out there
Now—ignore me, boss! I have seen
The arc you have been dreaming about ("Shut the door") by the way
And I understand what you mean by the squares
Being the most open and the…
No you didn't get a shape actually, did you. A silhouette
Of a pillow princess was considered, I'm sure
I saw. Don't shoot! I haven't told a soul. And I have seen you
Move away from these visions. The arc

You had it correct the arc
Is from the beginning of time
Until the end and/or loop of it, Sir—
As I knew you'd appreciate it now: please let me take
Those last flicks of that bruise, my leader. The shop floor
Is functioning well and we are going to have a bright future. I can hardly believe
My own words. We pushed through it
As a group. The committee's forecasts! Much harder
To invent the work we have got now, but steady clients
Have been built. You look so magnificent in that chair,
This room, Sir. You fill the space so handsomely.
Would you have pictured me
As scruffy? Let me take to my knees… No?! My goodness.

Sometimes We Just Cut It Off

Blocks build themselves under closed eyes as you visit old lovers in the morning: I wish
The blocks would have stayed, their intricate
Adaptions much more interesting, pretty
And manipulative. You would have liked them. The tape moves on.

New One for You!

You took a tape measure to your stories and made an ontology and just listen to how they
sound now. O it isn't hard: wait
A couple of minutes and you'll say them again. Your friend
Hacked at theirs
And sold them as shiny jewellery
And incomplete pieces of; and you know what? Annoying
As it is? You bought them, didn't you,
Wanting to support the bitch. You'll show her, for look what you have gotten
With your tape measure.

You have never had a tape measure and you've never
Measured anything in your life, nor used
"Ontology" outside of *where*? Someone else did *what*? That's

Brilliant, Mickey, named after the mouse, we hear. Must have been
Some show, you schmuck. No don't spoil it. No don't give me
The cast: I'll guess. Fine—*you'll* guess! I mean I'll see them and we'll guess.

What a life we've made, Mickster! A new one for you!

School Run Without the Pick Up

As if it's a school run, only it's a coach
And you're the driver, though there's hundreds of children, more
Than the coach can fit, and they get off
And out the through windows without you necessarily stopping sometimes, although some
Reboard this light… actually, now space-
Ship through the back while you study the route
Again, noting the number of the street
The school is on, when you never intended to pick them up again anyway. It's like you forget

The large swathes of time, during which
You don't look in your mirrors, down at earth;
And everyone is an alien—not just the kids—
Only you don't tell them that. Remember when you were Otto, dude! Not anymore
You don't, because now you cruise
Knowing it's a school run without the pick up.

Entering Certain Readers

You climb aboard like you're hesitant to feel owt: I am over(?!) these kinds
Of poems; yet I'm still going to finish
With this one, reluctantly. How was it for yo-
O you don't care about that either.

Len Gurts Quatrain (Just Found)

Quatrain?
It's sunny!
O I was a pain
But funny.

Out to Watch a Sunrise

Pushing through the market circle, you can surf
Without having to do too much
Of the wrong thing, or even the extravagant
For those you wouldn't want to in a million years.

I like to take myself away
On the buses, without any interaction
While I take my edge off, being careful
Of creating friends that are also momentarily brilliant surfers.

I'm hesitant to say it, but I guess
I'm going to the beach, the rays
I hope to find there being a goal whether I can lie out in them
Too long, or not. I've made a plan! That's what I'll stick to!

I've no deep issue with anyone else, only I know
What the people are really like
If they've arrived for this early spray: "So where
Are the spiders?" they'll say, when I'm just trying stuff on.

As We Retry the City

Agent provocateur with his three holidays and teenage impatience
Placing jokes to bypass conversation
Whilst staying spacey without being able to say so.

Agent provocateur with all her minute-or-two mates
And her belated, deflated discovery of hobbies
Grows more and more sorry as her vision gets blurry.

Agent provocateur with his collections of everything and rising grade
Paying for it on Tuesdays
To get him through to Wednesday's haze: London—early train.

Agent provocateurs spurring everyone on around them
To remove themselves, the agents'
Need for crowds screaming loudly

From the feelings they leave around me
As we retry the city, their squawks stalking poisonous.

"But What if There's No Room on the Hil-" Don't!

After your arduous journey

Where you learnt the word “arduous”, and how
It was not only the case that “arduous
Journey” came as one like that—when you’d finally stopped
Rolling around on the floor clutching different knees, until you slowly, pantomimingly
Got up and limped around and winced for a bit
Before you saw a cross coming in, and you knew you could make it,
So you suddenly sprinted and got on the end of it and scored the winner against your old team: you didn’t
Celebrate, mostly because it was only your old teammates
Around anyway; after this, you finally saw the mountain
In the silence you’d left yourself in, and you
And all the other new hikers stood staring, unsure
Who to trust to mention their arduous…
We joke. No one mentions those at the real base.
…But no one dared mention the medical terminology
They could see other climbers falling into either, nor
Did any of the obvious newbies you knew you’d be seeing
At the top for years to come hesitate about starting
To head up, as they knew—also
In silence, with you—that the alternative was rolling around again: how embarrassed
You were that you’d done that on those terms: “I can’t believe I sprint-”
You couldn’t believe you’d sprinted—had had to stop yourself celebrating—not that you ever
Admitted to that; and you wouldn’t be caught dead doing either now (operative: caught) nor inventing
“Pantomimingly” or convincing gestures
For injured friends you pass, as you haven’t seen any of that in years, nor the bottom
Of this climb, which was actually quite eas-
But again we appreciate the quiet here.

<u>Stood on Table to Reach Air</u>

Open the hatch!
Open the hatch!
Through the hatch… my shadow; my match.
And she looks… like… her, though without that
Godly glow,
That I knew so well
But now, were foes
Where does it go
What we make
What breaks us down
And made me shake, on the table!
As I am not able, to handle
The glow… that’s still there! I stare…
Am I a creep? She seeps
Back into me… I want to shout
Profanity! Insanity
She is. We were. How is she there?
Why am I here?
Reading this to you instead
And not her

Shall We… Have Another Chat?

Ark at your experience rapidly changing moment to moment
And the one who sees it. We are here
To support each other through them now, though not closely,
As it'd be strange to be speak weird any further, those different message tones
You'd created to match your punctuation schemas per group
Remarkably hard to feign after you know you feigned—madness! Yes it's true
We all knew way in the middle here
Indifferently, maybe a bit perplexed for a bit but more bored
Staring at our watches, because your attributes
Were always perfect for what we forget about again now too. You want
Us to be calling from somewhere, don't you,
To confuse and yet entertain
The shoppers—so we have this front
On the fanciest street you can picture, because we know
You see it, and it isn't contradictory of us to be giving it all away
From here, because we've made it, and we're fairly settled after lunch. They'll buy
That won't they? But that doesn't matter: let them window
Shop until they work out the door is still wide open—
That it's not just an entertaining stare
At times; and it certainly doesn't warrant *another* chat, no.

It's Always Funny

I love how he nods at the absurdity in a way I would suggest at least to myself that I nod at
        the absurdity. He presents it
As the only "it" there could be
Without his own presentation needing be an "it" itself,
Nor a philosophical argument, though we are obviously
Able to premise it loosely in other contexts
Because of all the reading we've previously tackled, which gives us
A *sense* of the *air* of where the… nodded suggestion sits, shall we say—the rarefaction
Of our minds making this instinctive in the way they should be, the manner of which
Being the way we are all going as a species too.
No it is *not* "absurdity" in the thinly-captured
Philosophical sense of the Western canon—have you been listening to me at all?
Well… well I think "rarefied"
Is fine there—why? Are you fucking with me you little toe rag? I've not
Spent the time I have unpacking such things
To have to also try attach them, that's all: feel the texts further. Acknowledge
How it plays itself out
In your life during your menial activities: it is here that you may first notice
The "allusions" he has not mentioned—that is my loose
Sound to use in conversation with you now, that's all;
Ignore what I said as I can see you grasping this
At 8:34 pm tonight; and I must
Leave, as I shouldn't have been here in the first place,
And your French teacher leaves with me also. No this isn't
An example: I've been watching your progress
And it just so happens that I've been having an affair too: you'll understand when you're
        older;
It can be that precise.

Just put it on my desk. I'm sure I'll be back. Here's my speech.
O let them critique the ceremony! As it's always funny
When they bring out their own prejud in their reviews.

Before-May Boy

Some days he thinks he's Jesus; some days
He's in a band. It's because
When they threw hands
He didn't feel a sound.

He tried to quit the Xans.
He had outrageous plans.
He visualised his fans.
He just couldn't suss it.

It all went to shit
For the wild, vile shit.
Wrong climate; all wrongs outed.
All the backwards bile he spouted.

"Don't listen to all I say," he said
Before he disappeared in May.

More Than Twice Removing Yourself

It struck itself before disappearing, as you come to mention it,
The wider idea of you destined to be whatever we say it isn't, so you know to suspend
yourself
For a climb down elsewhere, your ego persistent
But picky nowadays. What respectable sense
Would it make to create that momentary fragment into something
It never need not last as anyway; and you're reading the assessments
And involving them from a time you previously urged their prompting, only in the correct
way, indicating
How the rest may not matter: it was fragmentary
And there's no apology—a piece from outside
From another side of life sunny-sided—so now it can all just sound funny.

Someone guesses the need to include what preceded
And to overcome it is not an advancement, a progression,
A post- anything but a merging to allow the real-time
Work of art to continue its day quietly, riding the hum of the taps
Despite not hearing what, leaving climbs behind
As you grow to merge in further silence for the remaining
Anything-but-adults, only-percentily childlike attaching irreducible representations
Unfaithfully but nontrivially to whatever's left, just as you turn away unsatisfied
Atop the epicentre not in the original
Which also taps away again calmly for a bit more time then:
You are going to need to face how disgusting you potentially are
And verily feel, and afterwards you'll understand
Your own mess in a rather indulgent, romantic way further
Premised within the paradigm you happen to fall upon at the time

Of your unfolding, and that'll feel perfect for you and the way you'll move forward
By continuing to stretch the fallout in an ostensibly meaningful way,
You more than twice removing yourself.

Take You Anywhere You Want To Go

All your friends are vile cunts, you're a vile cunt; and this too
Has passed.

You kept coming inside people that were not Lacan, nearly
The total opposite of Lacan, in fact

That they could have möbiusly… Hang on a minute!

Are you allergic to anything? Small portions.
Light fingers through the dark.

Stab in the Dark

You made yourself a pin cushion
And tried sewing. We have here a cloud-splitter
Or a split cloud—we haven't decided yet—and out of it
We receive more repetitions
At a higher weight for you to try, the soundtrack,
The now-loud hum you hear holding
The thresholds you reach but cannot hear
Just as you've finished carrying the front man
That's falling apart, the lead songwriter,
The muse for all our future work and the effusioner
Of narrative: that's all failing, the work
Deleting itself for its own inspired rain. How we wish
We'd sown sooner so we could've made a pin cushion
For ourselves instead, rather than of.

Auto Reply (Was Way Ahead Of You)

You are vile and embarrassing and you absolutely will get ill
If you do not acknowledge the full extent of yourself. Email me
Again and I will contact the police.

Key to the Highway

Gain off your pain is everything; and you are going
To place something other here. It means you no doubt
Repeat your Kant walks through these trees
To earn more trees, little seeds
Also to nurture later, though all you yearned before
Need not go first, in fact—it just says that—as you could continue
Certainly, it loud
Momentarily out for a little stretch, a bundle of tones
None quite fitting in or unpicking; and yet
Your thumbs out and there's a lift: you knows it.

If You Deliberately Sabotage My Band I Will Fuck You Like a Pig

I mean it quite literally
When I say we get off on you not understanding: you don't know
What I'm playing at right now, do you,
As we speak. It's because you turned up late, I suspect;
Or he came at all! Astonishing. Didn't think
They were admitting new members. Always? Since when?
OK that does make sense. Great poet though! Yes please read
One of hers out if you like. O yes she's very
Accessible—very. And O it'll fit
The tone in here
Perfectly. Great cadence! Have you done
This before? And O again! You'll drive me wild,
The newbies mad if you keep that up. O!

I Will Wait One More Night

It's really hard to stand anywhere, let alone
Still, to explain how the means of reaching yourself,
Let alone anyone else, is possible,
Especially when you settle on achieving this in a contrived manner

Whilst standing by the concept, only not
The execution, only that'd be enough
For someone already schooled enough
Not to be. When a clever trick is played at the very end

Of the night, and you laugh—assuming
You pictured a night out now—then you are lost
Because of the night out; and you laugh
Separately because of the real

End of the night after the contrivers
Have gone, only it doesn't make sense to have anything
To laugh at if you believe in the night
As you believed, in itself: these

Are the places we began trying to get to,
And I can barely see us dancing en pointe, I think,
Which is again a problem—an automatic one;
Perhaps in the air—whereby I appear just as I feel I have separated us

Enough to make to a point that strictly cannot be made
As demonstrated at every turn, some
Feeling more right than others, a step above desultory;
And something seeming again like a smelt kiss (I meant

Spelt?) that wakes up just for us to ease
Into the day eventually without dreams
Or needless breaks or standing on anyone's toes,
If that is what was happening like it is now, which…

So you at least have already graduated
And are less than impressed. I'm glad I have someone
To still talk to here then though I know
Logically I shouldn't be.

Inside Jokes

When I do it, it's profound, but when they
Do similar it is all a bit cringe, isn't it? Then there's that
Child to wrestle with to get them through the window
I can hardly tolerate being open, what with all the draft,
But my back seems to like them: it's like playing Nervous. I'm fed up
Of them teasing me
With their ways of improving themselves though, when I've got my own children
To be looking after, nurturing, getting
Out the garden or inside jokes. They keep it all to themselves. They've got rules
I don't get and they're clearly laughing
Behind my back while I'm just trying
To get involved without worrying how it looks. But I know how it sounds.

I Know What You Did Last Bloated Exposition

No they aren't going to want the script yet:
You're a newbie—just impress them with your charm;
Hold the emotion of the room like you've always been there,
Like they can't do without you: that's how you'll get a spot.
You did that before though: want me to take over? I was
Shopping, you know, before this
Was even a thing you thought was going to be here: I don't want to imply
We're communicating. We could put some extras in there? Seems to work. How about
more?
So you knew that'd be a bit too much
And it wouldn't work; only they'll see
Us again now, anyway, don't worry. Ready? Suppose
There was a meeting then, but in the logical sense that it's always
Happening, us attending to it or not. You could take it as advice, sure—
Many would and do! Shouldn't we read over the lines once more by ourselves though?

On Kitsch Line Drawings

I see kitsch line drawings holding you together
In a strictly schizoid sense, I don't mean
To find you here—I don't know how to say it:
Away from me you are going, only louder.

Your wave sounds loud, I mean,
And you've surfed it for millennia: you keep returning
You do. You do. I'm so sorry
For your found, for this found.

I picture you along with needing a further setup now: it is not
Disrespectful, to be critical,
But a simulacrum—it almost

Tastes lovely—of just that; the feeling

That was now better and is now not, the itch
Scratched, though for removal you'll go back.

Inspired in Manaus, Was I

How many links does it take to make a chain? If you're still in port
With that anchor after that I'd be ashamed. You've brought all that shopping
Along? Gotcha! But it's words
For a sentence for Christ's sake, Misty—how many times
Do we have to say that we *do* just enjoy giving away this fruit
On the harbour while we think about other things to talk about? Inspired
In Manaus, was I.

I'm in bed with a very very bored face
Picturing that chain for your sake—her button mouth.

You are doing one of endless things.

Trying Another Meetup Group

The hobbyless who don't like comedy: welcome,
Though this is not ketamine, an episode, despite.

If I said we were doing this here the whole time, that there's no
Master until the next one shows, would you believe…

In fact, would you understand? I forgot about that.
I'll be up front and say I was anxious

About how the group started too, but what was said—
"We were doing this here the whole time":

It seemed to help! Though we worry we're going nowhere, what with
The characters that keep appearing: we were aware

In advance you'd be bringing more with you, some of them fast, slow, short,
Measured, no doubt wise to how we did it before.

Why did you hide in the nonsense
Out there with that lot? It would have been better

To say that earlier; can we add it to the manifesto? Write it another way then!
See—we bicker too. The comedy's still bad. Go ahead! Try it. Sounds good.

I've Highlighted Them

I'm happy to disbelief anything, even my own
Ramblings with the latest empath when we're dragging each other down
Till we're inside each other (the jealous boys were right about me), theories
That aren't not stories but stories passing away, sharing
To then disappear and radios sending Xena's signal,

Only then you lose sleep, and it all *must*
Mean something and your mother's breast…
Well you'd do it again, wouldn't you,
Not that you can vouch for the first time: what do we reckon—
By the sounds of it? "I'm looking between…
I'm looking between lines seven and eight
For the change? I don't know how to place that
In the review without upsetting him, in the next office,
When I know the truth." He was once a jealous boy
Until he stopped voicing his opinion—displaying any humanity about
Anything to anyone—outside of his escort's apartment.
Now a *sketch* of a bottle of sleeping pills
To be displayed and then reviewed would be interesting, wouldn't it, the thought
Of a large percentage hallucinating whilst being terribly angry
The whole time and it not making the slightest bit of difference, it only
Categorically proving that reincarnation must be the case
In a very logical and clinical manner
Else my head would stay this hurt, as paradoxical as it may be for you.
Yes that is my anatomy, but that's OK: I believe
(O bother) it stops us returning
Or overthinking that non-Dada piece from the breakaway
Dadaist. O of course he was always trying: it's like knowing
And producing and forgetting and saving the pigs—
You saw his trough, right?—selflessly.
Why would they be anything like humans conceptually: exactly! And this
Is why we lie in tandem and yet opposite
As we are doing, baby. The baby
Sounds were fine yesterday though! I can't win.
"Yes it's still between those two lines for me: I've highlighted them."

Board Games at Grandmas

You really need to consider what you're going to do
Before you reach these numberless pastures
About all that assault you've been up to
Now we're green and sad and powerless.

No one's calling you a liar—it's just the game: they never make
Those calls but they are: back down
The snake you go with a "Whee!"; and because of that, you won't feel
The snakes double till you search for ladders.

We're green and sad and powerless, we said. This board is flat.
Rules? Giz us a minute! Sorry. Not like
Us now, we're just struggling to know what you're playing at still.

OK we've got it don't move. No—don't move.
Stay on the snake! Stay on that fucking snake don't you *dare*
Get off that snake! There's different rules here. Better? Perfect shade;

And when they do this you'll care not a jot. Ignore the faces.

Became a Builder, Hired a Cleaner, Talking Sweet About Nothing

All the bigots in the middle didn't care for you cleaning house
Yet you cleaned house, and they aren't invited
Anymore, which is a shame considering you expanded theirs. What are they like
Eh? No idea—no penetrating
Their social mobility now; still got scrap paper
Baskets in the corners behind the pain—how could you not?
Yes that is pain—do you like what I've done with the place? I like
How you let all yours hang out
Without noticing. You didn't? I thought we were meant to write the whole piece?
Anyway I'm returning to the garden now: you missed a spot.
And I stand corrected! I did let you in. Now I want us to be able to see
Our faces in that together by the time I'm done
Applying this oil. Don't worry about that! It covers the scrap and I know
You've plenty of your own to worry about
At home: I guessed to begin with too.

Moments You Can Never Touch

It will appear to be something else
At the beginning before it becomes something else
To really get under your skin/turn you on, like when you leave
The mind's game to see an example of the sky above: her looking
Up at you with a "Put me through the bed" smile, the one
Given to you before like it was a problem. This is unconnected but it makes it last longer, the way,
The way you believe the notes on this fence
Need remain standing. What could this be?
I know! Something for you to sit on? Which makes it the same
As this and any other one
Once you've gone through this checking too: maybe
This isn't a bed, but a support on a faint, temporary
Support-itself-now underlay. I don't know. I don't know she was just
Crawling around under you—like this; couldn't have been me;
Digging in more
Foundations for more
Little panels?—and you got all confused
And couldn't just enjoy it, could you.

Did King Saul have Bipolar Affective Disorder? (Composing Hallelujah)

How long will homemade soup last in the fridge?
Some of them continue to conflate rejecting
Vegetables with rebellion, coolness. It's exactly what it is today.
I still can't talk about him like many others, but I've got an Andalusian dog—in French
No less—to keep me ticking along. A waste of time for the uninformed,
And you and me both when I use my compass:
This way! But did he do it that way?
I had all these dreams when I was walking, techniques I was going to try
During games night, only guess what happened:
That got played anyway!
Don't tell me you do it during the day. To be fair I'm about to.

Tricky spot to get out of
Now though, what with all the resolve: you taste it—
It's the same taste which makes it really hard
To ignore their Kahlo tattoos. The film has been undone.
The soup also has a film! Shortly before he ascended the throne
Amongst the trees? Probably. But now it looks like I was there with him
When I'm just going from the "accounts", sure—odd what we come up with
In here when you only need to add stock for starters. No! Never walk him alone.
Just let him go round in circles in that pen.

"Ashley and Me"

Just in case.

Lay-by (Every Little Helps)

I've done so much work
I can't look straight
I feel more berserk, though measured
I've got no mates

I know when they're pretending to be Black Francis
They think it's just copying the sound—that they're real
They don't know it's bound
To feedback badly when they're manic again

Minutes ago there was gold
It seems it was just a feeling
A feeling that's old
And now I'm reeling

From it; I was writing a poem earlier
I am now again a courier

Out Damned Debris

Lying in bed letting the giant cheese grater do its thing
While you floated on the ceiling was nice, wasn't it—all the poetry you needed
Then; so why need we this now? Probably because we're struggling
To bring it together to this day, accepting the chefs as they really were. Exhausting
Getting used to the bed now too, what with all the podencos
Blocked from the vaults. Still—look at this room! A mess
To many no doubt, but your mess,

And you're happy to share it with friends.
Though I'm trying to get away from you.

It makes sense to me why all these people go on ghost tours
Rather than read any of this drivel.
Ghost tours are also something I believed in
At one time along with stranger danger
And thinking long and hard about what I'm doing, I think,
Because you nearly did it again, did you notice that? You. Up there.

Instant Mashed Potato

This has definitely been put in better ways, but I don't care for it much now—
I just like writing about it. Did you follow me all the way here from the kitchen, where I was playing
With recipes? Always more important to regard the finished dish, savour the flavour,
Than to care about what's here, as it may just be seasoning
Which still works together nicely, at times. Reminds me of Smash! Remember Smash?

I hate when that happens: you're getting somewhere then someone reminds you
O forget it. I think I know where I'll end up with this one now though!:
You've put myself in a position
Where it's hard to redeem the plot, yes? OK—"pot" then; doesn't mean
All that toxicity wasn't for a reason, reader.

I know: really hard now. And we still haven't alluded to the alluded to sex; and that
Sound! But I guess the noises eventually go beyond
A bearable threshold and do enough
By themselves: produced by Batchelors? Still not sure, are we. To think we evolved last night.

Punctuated Equilibria

At some point it clicked:
Look at these licks!
He does it by smiling
These'll go for miles

Without punctuation (mostly)
Already knows your diction
From far away
Like Yahweh

But this one better be longer for you to say
To make you obey
The voice of the poet
As you speak it

The reason for this
Is cladogenesis

Let's Dance

"Where are you heading?" The boatman on the Nile.
"Away from the door-to-door knockers," I said. "They're too tempting."
"Even worse along there!" he said, pointing upstream. I couldn't believe it: all the way out here and they still have witnesses?

That's what god is on this trip then: a river cruise;
A sightsee of ancient monuments, fresh fruit, imagined
Markets and trade routes from antiquity

When Egypt was called "Kemet": black land. The papyrus

Plant once grew in abundance along the Nile too, and I like that a lot,
But I believe it is now extinct here, which is a shame and I don't want to check properly.

Shade Yourself

You wanted to rid them of pain; and you also,
Eventually, fancied getting yourself a fancy umbrella, not
That it rains: it *does* grow here! A parasol! Eh up!
Was that an apple just now? But it had to be
"Just now"—the reminder you needed: you could have said anything otherwise
Like last time: you've no respect for umbrellas? But if you care
That much you can't stay broken then, can you,
Else you'll turn inside out: yes you're also
The parasol: shade yourself.

Last Rites

Finally! You were coming down that tunnel for decades.
Bet it felt like a rollercoaster, didn't it? Pathetic.
You thought you looked cool? You're covered in goo!

Now you're a dysregulated skin bag in survival mode
Who doesn't know it. You're excellent
At becoming whatever is needed for the person in front of you, and you can bend

To them as their skin bag reacts too, and you don't notice that either—
Neither of you do—as you've both deceived yourselves
Into believing your beings are how you act with each other, which is ironic

Considering you don't hold a single belief between you either. Nothing
Will change for you and you certainly will not read this poem.
Unfortunately there's been nothing but short straws over aeons to get to where you are, and
somehow

Your bag crawled this far but it's time to go, thanks.
Relax! You won't feel a thi… Well it'll be like always.

Campbell's Temporary Step Ladder

The first of morns collect like hazy drumrolls, before you pull your own finger
Out and squirt yourself: what was all that about? Clowns
Amass outside with a requirement of new noise
Which they accept, and you pretend to every single one you pass and extend a hand to
That it was an accident. But at least you're up! Not quite

In step for the music you watched the dog find on the mat—good job you never buy them.
You expected more. You expected a full band
And a circus and someone to be pulling it for you, only now
It's another limb not even you bargained for: dare you play
With fate like this masking god's potential sound

To spite Campbell's temporary step ladder? Looks like it,
Though it's hard work. Would you give me even a slither

Of the drumro… But that's you launching the kit
Out the window: one less poet's voice to navigate the day with.

Car Crash

The leopard never changes its clarity. I'd been searching for it all day
As usual—no use: I was finding it quite effective, but as'll become clear
When you know what I'm near, they closed
The zoo down. In many ways I'm staring through the bars,

But do ask me, as it isn't all one long trip.
On we drove elsewhere hoping to discover
Which caused the argument, more scenes,
Animals gawking. "I think they know more than us

With their very little means." It's like these things're said
On these journeys just to make it worse—more awkward. It's difficult to mention.
"Are we there yet?" Pets
Can talk and it's essentially why you bring them

Along, else where would you be without them? On safari! I knew
You'd gone the wrong way! But look the black spots are here again!

Harvester Food Critic Reads Quantum Mechanics!

When I do not understand something, I now
Conclude that I do not understand something and either learn or move on.

Some of the Restaurant Ideas I Had!

That wasn't you? Then don't worry about it!
But you know who's worrying, don't you? The one who's been watching repeats again?

That's how I used to speak to them, the potential
Investors, as if they could see

What I was doing, like I thought I could see them too! It's a good job
I don't do that now, now that god is safely inside me. That's

All I called for! But while I'm on
The line I might as well tell you that I sometimes struggle to chew through

The gristle because of what I've previously cooked. No it won't impact
The meals, now. Though I know what some of you foodies are like!

But it does mean I still sometimes wipe things on these pristine
Napkins to help me finish. It won't be for long though: I've got filet mignon queued up

With ketchup! Well you don't know until you've tried it!

Heart of Matter

Could do with some diastole now, couldn't you,

But you'll never get it
The way your chat's gone to pot.

Open, you were, for long though. Now you just force it,
More imitating
Than you'd care to mention, the body buying it too, systoling

Its language
Tightly, warped riven of temporality,
Impenetrable wanker quite literally:

Give it up. Let someone in.

A Ham Sandwich is Better Than Nothing

You'd had enough and came here to play with yourself
In the darkness, though I realise…
Sorry—I should've said we
…We realise moths edging ceiling lights
Still appeals; and watch me do this thing now like it's
Like it could have lighted the load itself: I used to do this
When I was talking to myself too, only now
You know what, if this is your first time? I wouldn't even bother. Absolute chaos.
No it isn't any wonder. Fuck off.

Cake Testing

As soon as I eat something I believe I want to eat I do not want to eat it anymore. O why
not—
I'm sick of it. But I'm guessing you're enjoying this? I'm somewhere
Indifferent. You know I just had an idea.

The plan was to get it out the way quickly—
On to the next one. "I'll do it!" Wrexham;
Someone had to do! Better than it metastasising

Into something theoretic. We assume…
"We assume that means we won't be needed anymore."
Had we really employed all those contractors before

For such vanity projects? What time is it?
Wednesday?! We better get to the funeral.
Wrexham's funeral! We worked with him

Extremely briefly on that catering contract. What did we sell?
Cake. No actually it was cake testing. Or did he taste ours?

Timing's Perfect

It's a trap, that there in the corner. It had to go somewhere.
Now it's down I'm not sure what it could say about itself:
KAHLIL GIBRAN! That should fuck the rats up.

While we wait to see what we've caught (who writes the poem?) we'll have time
To lazily discuss the growth that's there
Once you've removed the need to recheck the outfit

That still looks the same—only not as you do—because they're always the same events too:
events. And who will be there
But future-proof pest controllers who won't be coming back
Putting down slabs

For the traps to go down to the woods today anyway? They did originally
Place them above, I hope—that much need *happen*;
It's not true in the way I know you think.

Oi! What you picking at in the corner? This'll be the least
I've been here in a while: still ignoring you didn't ask? But his timing's perfect!

Just Square It

You're a crocodile; don't try and be Phil Foden in every action.
This is what I do for you, selfless funnelling
Of aimless ego to embody what appears to you this time
To be a shed, stunned, we are,
At how the architecture isn't so important anymore.

All the site staff have just fucked off too. Can you do it yourself?

I'll stand here. You know, I can't believe how much we cleared out
Just to build this shed a little bit higher. Seems odd to me… but that just demonstrates how
easy it is to buy into already:
I don't know what I'm really saying!

Quiet now—the interviewers. We give them the process
On their terms and say nothing
Of the strings *really* supporting the architecture.

Remember when we worried about that?! Madness!
Just square it.

Better Than Clogging One's Wings With Damp

Thank for angels and demons being over
Because here's these sexy guns: which way? You could never make
Head nor a tail of them either, float
As they will through the mythological
Psychodramas filling up our shelves
Down the walls before leaving behind
A submerged climbing frame within time, heaven
Ineffable around us unless you fancy climbing again, a cheap
Trip of my own due, one for you—your choice:
I now pick up the fork I prepare with and it reminds me of nothing; I look
After my body
And scan widely: a similar foot
Could've touched this rung; all now works, between

Anterolaterals, waiting for you and other leading men.

Up-Selling Carriage Shifter

We've cut the paths back to the original labyrinths, so you'll see it's really straightforward.
Tea?
So the slabs are easy to navigate. The planks—
No not the planks. You used to have decking?
We may have laid another one out
Here: you must speak to my manager.
And there is space for an elevator
In this spot after all, if you wish—if you'll be staying?

Martin Luther has just stopped by! I knew you'd want him gone.

In this next carriage, Buñuel once sat briefly during one of his dreams
To consider masturbating before continuing. Sir you said
You were weighing up your options, that's all,
So we're obliged to make everything available to you now: the train does have a garden.

OK OK the whole train is yours—it has to be:
You named it! So please
Don't tell them I did this, but wouldn't you at least *buy*
One of my plants with it?

Because you know as well as I do, that every carriage
Must go through the tunnel
Passing the speeding trains the other way
And the sun flashing through the trees.

Enough

They'll believe anything other than accepting it's coming from the same mouth—listen to
them:
"This is not the same! It is close but
Not exactly the same! "You"! "We"! All these disparate
Referents!" Has to be
Formulaic but disruptive enough
Does the journey to make it a mountain
That can be climbed or skied: heavenly run
That last one Darling orgasmic (steady now! You just be steady).
But it's hard
To be when it's spoken to you as it… wait
A minute? Just… what? Why… are you…
Why are you doing this to me?
Because we do it to ourselves, don't we, Darlings: GO!
Because we do it to ourselves *enough*!

Mediocre Snow

""Cosmic contemplation was next: I've looked it up;
Wasn't bothered how silly I looked, still miles
Above.' It came to me in a drea-

I don't actually have to be paying you—reading this—
Do I; what kind of sound would ambivalence make:
I'll turn it into
Whatever I say about this matter' is what
We have so far," said Cig
In the desert where something phallic,
No oxalic was ready to grow on the snow mediocrely
Considering the banging next door; and without it? Mediocre snow.

Looks Like a Stretch

Now that you are here you can walk past the yoga class
Because of how the space works, and stop
And look through the window and smile—which is empathising—
At the lack of a stretch to say there's only one hand, Moore, but not out loud in the street
For you know who appears weird still, and you continue
To dress the way you do underneath those clothes.

This isn't quite it, but you knew that. Susan's
Going to come out shouting in a few hours and Billy's
Going to call her by her old name Susan;

So it remains a bit odd being here, what
With everything clapping itself, only silently? You mean you can't even
Congratulate what *looks* like a stretch?

Logic?

I reckon from the building *itself*—be careful now!; glance
Over the side—you'd never be able to tell
It was pure mathematics, like
How many ways can you make "eight"?

Yeah with numbers why not. You know I bring these
Up here to throw off: apparently
A coin from this height would split a man
A screw? No chance we're doing that. Try "discrete"? Logic?

Reminds Me of You

It's always the other half of everyone we meet,
How lucky, like all those forgotten crimes
Of youth everyone else made up too
Ready to stroke your child's face in years to come as they leave you.

Or maybe it's just you? I'm glad it wasn't just me (yet you're also
Guilty!), though if it was me it wouldn't sound
So bad. In fact, I wouldn't be able to say anything: I am *always*
Trying to do better how dare they! Who even *are* they!

This is how all the lovely people disappear then, usually
After doing something stupid
Right after they were nauseating. So in between

Nauseating and lovely they did something stupid

You mean? I think so. Who knows what plagued them.
I could tell them anything. Actually remind me of you!

More Psychic Automation

So I have the form. It appears easy.
I am going to be filling it in for some time. There's all these wrong answers to use!

There are only these waiting rooms, aren't there,
To turn to. Are we seen somewhere now?

The leopard. The leopard
Cannot wear

A coat; but you can burp
And clear your dormant nostril.

You Can Do What You Like

How long will he make you wait?
How long will he make you wait?

Under his thumb, pinched
With the first finger too to annoy you

Unorthodoxly he had you lightly, before he forgot
About you and moved on

To some place else, if he thought
Of them even at the start, that is: perhaps

They didn't even know this, for what happened
Between them? He always changed

So much to reflect on, and I know they'd rather not.
I'm trying to talk about something else; I don't

Want to give too much away, but I'm afraid they
Return? I feel like I'm making it worse;

It'll be the same down here for me
Myself: how long will he make you wait? When will you learn? Because

Still, it would have been that light touch: thumb
And first finger. But different hands

Beneath you?! How many of them? So how long
Will he make you wait even if the load's

Shared? And between those was it all that, really? Because you know
They'll never get it. You and me both!: you know

You'll never change. He did that subtly then.
Imperceptible. Well they shouldn't trust him anyway! You can do

What you like though, obviously.

Speed Birdwatching in the New Neighbourhood

Got it! From outside? I was looking out the window:
A robin? That too! for this is how everyone
Does it; only I've ruined
My own by not going with the first bustle
Jamming in—that all the other bird books
Leave out, by the way. Well they better do!

It's gone now. Flew off. Only
Perhaps it shook the whole lot, taking more
Of the trees with it? I guess I live here now?

As this is the kind of thing that keeps 'um coming, seeing
What's been said before
Only the window cleaner's changed.

Serving Up a Look, Dancing in a Drought

Well if you dress it up like that you'll have all the lunatics believing
There's somewhere to go; yet at the same time
You put it just right, don't you,
Your tongueless shoes. Meanwhile we stay out of pain
        Shift over
For new students. What are you reading? Annoy the…
No irritate the thingamabob—may have been Eliot,
John. He thinks he's right at the front of class though regardless
Of where you put him. Remember when we stole his jacket haha
Awful. O of course you wouldn't—it's what you're here for.
It's OK we can do that again later.
Yes this is mine; and no it isn't modelled on Joseph's. But it's not lost on me!

And when the house is empty
And it is cold, we make the hours of the night last for as long as possible
With God knows what—whatever lights we find—
Even through the rain for the clouds.

Staying? Nah he always goes over.
Seminars?! You really are new.
Not that I know what's going on anywhere else.

Pandiculation!

I like them stretching
The truth, more than you can
In more fickleness, before they then do

The cow, forever! Pandiculation! That's what I was after
Expecting

From you: the yawning part;
The slinking off. The tipping over.

I Have Seen Len Gurts Today

He is beautiful but he manspreads and I do not know what to do with him
As he appreciates my performative
Artistic tastes
When they are turned on during the holidays, nothing
I can explain: worthy
Of a PhD thesis, is he

Until he sells out and changes, or I sell out
And follow his lead—my original name;
Out the mire—when no one is next to me
Of course, finally
Seeing what Len was trying to demonstrate

With his jewellery left behind on the seat.
And then I saw him stretch

His arms so high
And show his midriff
As he switches train away from me.
No one opens doors like him.

Sing With… You?

All this self-awareness (again!) is making my stomach rumble: I must
Need a piercing, the word "collegiate", depending.
You must be high above them.

I must (again!) get off dating apps. I must
Remember my poetry. I must know my ABCs
To sing with me. I must use the rule of three.
And yet

It looks, sounds
So pleasing interesting, content-wise,
Always, while they look down on you

Before a fall: it wasn't you all along.

Adlib

Maybe you'll never be able to do it genuinely. You like textured paintings
One minute then do not understand angled aesthetics
The next: it starts sounding like this. The losing
Of that then, cheating
Into this? And it's like a Hooper—

Give you three years. Manufacturing
Manufacturing. Standing in one place
Building the next until the reference point
Ain't separate either?—the fuck.

The irony's it being freeingromantic, yeah—
Reminds me a Ginny. If you make yourself it
You make yourself it; violently authentic;
Fiercely resistant
To yourself and everyone's gone. Why's it drop like this?
Where's your "come up"? Wow.

Left a good job in the city. Henry Miller for the next few weeks then.

*

I think I get it: they're mixing the symbols
Of the frameworks for the thing-in-itself
And trying to grow(!) that way
Whilst clinging on to some of that footwear, psychotic relationships,
A third thing, because I'm the same. It's all being delivered
By the paperboy as an ontology—fuck um—
So there's no chance. All the colourful packaging
Way beyond clogging the arteries. Weirdos talking
From far back like reading off scripts, so when you adlib
They collapse *by growing*
Louder!

*

Between the two
Causing a face—perhaps going back
Somewhere—you pull in.

<u>Travelling Around the Islands of Lake Erie, North of the Long Point Spit</u>

The power of stories. Making things up again.
I've been waiting for you all day
Now the coast is clear, like the waves're
Fit for yachts or buoys, lighthouses

From other islands to get us there, not
Necessarily in one piece though, though not
That we care when we just enjoy sailing
Choppy waters. And the conversation you missed

Around Second Island? About lighthouses aiding
Easier navigation? We were moving on
From surviving your endless delusions about the inhabitants
Around here as we set off: the whole lake's above sea level;

They're nothing! That's better you stopped talking—
Let me think. Though I see them all now! Whereas

When it's choppy they're easier to miss—
Ignore. Is that a metaphor? What do you mean: I just don't like talking to them.

Look! Snow Island!

And Yet

When I was younger I would take myself so seriously
In the library by shuffling my papers
Before narrowing my programmed eyes and neurolinguistically
Attempting to get things moving
Usually in the wrong way, using
The paper weights in the wrong way
To get things done: what was I doing?

Mini Knit Repair Hook

Do not cut them loose! Pull the thread
Back through. Because who'll know

They were there
But you.

Ruined Cashmere Though? But I Can't Do It!

I mean, by all means put it on, because
All attention is good attention!
                                It'll
Probably attract more jumpers too
You can design or be inspired
By YES sustainable fashion—right! and you may

Soften your face pulling your head
Back through *it*—HA:
Nearly forgot about this! and you may

Eventually even find a style
That works for you, forever. Though that's
Doubtful. But at least
It got us here. What was it before? All sorts;
Elbow patches! You and your manners.

But you want more? Let me try
The old ones on first. How do they stick? Blanket
Stitches, apparently.

No idea; maybe Sanskrit?

O it's definitely goats.

Wake Me Up When They Do

"No hall mirrors reflected joy"

—*Sohrab Sepehri, 'Beyond the Seas'*

Joy, too, has an enemy
As it reflects on Kat Slater provoked.

The vacuum of your mind turns
As your eyes do to the end of fire, across the fir's

Branches, down amongst brambles, knotted, wedge
And scabby bits. And then the vacuum of your mind again.

Regularity offered—taken—
You now wonder when joy

Will come back, temporarily, wait,
Long overdue was its scene, setting

Curtained—gone. Though it was called
You wanted to believe.

Drowsy

"She was such a bitch": it was as if he'd put
Something for everyone we hadn't invited
On the table and said… well… what he'd said! Genius

Obviously, because I hadn't even shopped yet, let alone
Cooked—decided what I'd cook—so by the time
The new interested parties arrived and the real poseurs

Returned, I'd have done my wifely duty.
"Can I try that one out?" "Sure!" Though
Hadn't he better be…

I needn't have worried; we have our own
Role play games in the house that we never share outside
Much—only to you! An interview? Oh my. I'd need…

I'd need to have more context!—and just as he forgot
His new direction in the industry
As he always

Does, he slipped into our sixth new neighbour in as many weeks; and she's only
Just turned seventeen! Ridiculous, really. "They aren't
Connected; I just want to please everyone, Nigel!"

Maybe she wasn't a bitch? Every time!

"After Looking At Your Website I Didn't Expect You to Be Such a Professional Compère"

Sometimes you just gotta come check it's still working—I'm the same,
All these ranges I was told not to look at,
When I could clearly help!

I'll regret revealing that; too late to invoice? Damn
Clever—exactly the reason to "check", as they said:
Your trust is also improving? It was there
Then fluidly but now I'm thinking about how to engage
The whole class, rather than just *doing* it—pulling threads;
Mocking the Taylor-Myers' for what I can only assume
Is some odd activity they're up to. Dangerous
Mentioning how your work self's separate—especially how you worded it, practised
How much? I helped out in ways you can never thank me for, all the while
Giving you Saturday morning discussion. Though at that open doorway flashing
Light through this nearer doorway! You see what the ranges're saying
About truth? Little—the silent dream
Above the sea—once you're inside. But don't worry of wher they've put it!

Brutalism

"I went from trying to make one person happy—
Which is impossible, even more so if you consider the person it was—to focusing
On making myself somewhat passable
For some evenings, plus irritating
To a whole new generation of stonemasons." And how's he
Getting himself out of this, for the masonry
Was always a means for travel: across

The plains he roamed choosing one of the oldest professions
Plus your harmless, though dull, ideas to make an ekoskeleton
Ready to be furnished minimally for sleep, a high-performance
Composite if you appreciate that he built the structure
As he moved along and erected the monolith at his final resting place: nowhere
Special. Signage for horses. I'm guessing they had horses!
Amazingly tourists visited
Willingly in foul moods wanting to get their own massive-
Precut stones signed. "If he
Carried it all this way, why can't we?" And of course
They could, but hadn't it already been done? Tonight is a Saturday, Saturdays
Being one of his considerations'.

Bohemian Rupture

How is it that you can take yourself away
On your own and manufacture those silver spoons, yet when it comes
To displaying them you look like a child? You thought you could act?

Although we really know it's the kind of thing
People like, crooked teeth, traces
Of impediment.

I am sorry for what I said.
I don't want you be there, but I still
Want you to come here if only
To chastise me for what I did not collect earlier
Of the sunsets when I was delivering. Though I am glad

What's happened has happened. I'm glad we noted this earlier—
It fits; without it—considering
How forgetful I am
About all I've studied, feigned: I'd
Have nowhere to make a home. They enjoyed
Being told they can't do it
As well as taking great satisfaction in knowing they can. The confidence
Levels to remain persistent and deliver is phenomenal.

Switching off Here

I wish you'd've invited me earlier—mmm! That tastes *lovely*!—
Because it's so nice to have something different
To write about other than myself? I see a red shed,
A hazy signal from the windup radio
Bringing the farmer's daughter out from it. I'm terribly visual
In the darkness is all; and these feelings
Seem to accord with my tongue. Totally different to my musings
On enlightenment and the inconsistency
Of it all—my earlier efforts on shibboleths. You're done
Taking photos of me? O. OK thank you: I could really do with switching off
Here for a few hours.

How Was the Buffet?

It was on the way to…
Where were we going? Grandma's house?
I'd love to say we were on the way to Grandma's house.
We were on the way
To Granddad's house after they'd both passed away, and we were
Throwing eulogies out the window: so young
Was I that this is what I'd orchestrated
Only not of their eulogies—I'd just been inspired
By the funerals: I actually thought we got in the hole with them!
Then I learnt
That we only *seemed* to be on the way
To granddad's house, as my older brother had stolen the car—
"Fuck um!"—and was actually driving us past it now
Through the wake.

How to Even

Hm-hm: I'm not sure how to even *write* that sound!
Every time I read these instructions
They make something completely different, at best. Usually
I get a coincidental mess: I pass it off as subversive; annoys me less
Than you.
'I'd rather eat dinner off the floor, daddy.' Man I'm super glad
I chose another life to that. They sometimes convince me
That I'm reading it wrong, too, the guidance; but then I nap
Or drink some water and I build a dinner table afterwards
Fairly easily. OK they're sometimes rickety
Reminding me of that one campsite. Then I nap again!

If someone else reads the manual out to me
That doesn't help. I find it painful. I'd rather guess. How wrong can a surface get?
"OK if you must. Though it's really for pets!"
Sometimes I scan
Over the mandate, get a feel of it,
Ignore the words or even *add* some, and then I think,
"You know what, kids—I don't want them saying that
About you anymore. So take it easy
And the guide'll smooth it out in no time anyway—
Even do it for us! What need
There be for all these… what are they—directions?
Only if you're really full! Let the dog have the rest.
Yes that's his seat!"

Agent Smiths

Preferable, were it not today,
Having the furniture
And green lettering always watching us
Between loud moments of never becoming them. I never sounded like this
There at least anyway, plus I ignored
The aftermath impeding of ignoring
The fulfilling of those ideas, because it's only juicy,
And tinned fruit's fine.

You pull the sofa out
And vacuum and it's clean
Ready to collect more. But can you just wave that nozzle… Actually

Not today. It's lost its mystic.
I don't know! I'm trying! Marigolds?
That won't work: you've hung around with too many teachers.

Mixed Voices In a Cafe

"So it looks like there was some kind
Of breakdown as well as
Breakup with an assault
To say the least in between, not

To mention the misdirected
Anger I'm sure he'd even
Hold his hands up t-"

Boring! Haven't you shifted?
And where *were* the ferns?

The "you"
You knew is waving: sorted.
Though I've heard

That in certain venues
From certain angles

And in certain lights

That scars
Can be made out on his pa-
"O give over:
You're disappearing fine!"

The Middle Land

Long-form texts and babies signing contracts,
Deciding the menu: the things you overhear
And can't drop or not add to.

S'all right! Break up the experience! Tabby's
Not watching how you be watching
Anyhows (though is he back?) and the time's

Gotta be passed somehow: you're waiting
For the removal truck, putting off complaints
About paper straws: how easy you've had it!

But it's a waste of good diesel
Is this journey, the waste of a size-of-football-field idea
Considering the closed roof we're now seeing

Under this Spiti Valley sky
Away from the shithouses between the cities we reluctantly utilise.

Stolen Good

It's like the salesman
Sells you the final fix
For the weather and you've got this
System installed
In your house just in time
For the front of it
Before you open the door
And there's no weather
And no more weather
Expected ever and the salesman
Drives past cackling, single
Banknotes dropping
To the floor out of his
Convertible, before
The neighbours
Return from walking
The dog unsure what to say.

I'm a Printer

Highly unlikely I'll read it in the city—all the admin—
But I'll take it anyway. Ah, now the bus:

Better get on! It's not the best way
To cook, forgetting the recipe along the way,
But you're bound to get something, what with all the eggs
Alongside everything else I've got in these baskets
(The driver, passengers
Haven't seen) do buses have tracks? Faster
Than I expected, this. Of course when I get off

Two more stops, drive! You should really hear them
Sometime. I'll be walking

Forgetting about when I used public transport
Like all you here; and I don't reply to him

At every station. Didn't you hear
My suggestion? He's locked in the cab;

This isn't a rattler and he's far, far away. Bendy
Bus: by all means. Think what you like.

There were fields and then there were urban areas, scenes
The chickens looked at, photographs
You looked at of poultry, shades
Of Christmases, stockings, silent
Carriages split milk.

<u>You've Got Loadsa Room, Pal!</u>

All the parcels we rushed out to take to the returns box together!
All the parcels we rushed out to take to the returns box together!

But you left—the car wash—
On the bus.

How will you take this life back, Joe,
Now you have spent
Such time lowering skylines
Behind Davy's roof? The hot tub
No
At the eco house wasn't enough? The keys?
I'll straighten it out: the one bright
Red key that unlocked the safe at the abandoned hospital
You left as you thought it best to.

Joseph, now, eh? Whatever you wish; only

Don't expect the embroidery business back
With her that was making you, what—pittance
Weekly? A tutted-through handjob?

I wasn't the one rushing them through though, was I.
I was driving.

All That's Left

Sitting in the tightest chair
Until it gives up and you
Get breath back and aches
Begin to build around
Older visions that come through
Tearily without a
Bit of bother: smear
It with jam and record
Breakfast, get out
As in it creeps, extend the
Day and forget the night, the day
Grown to one
Long life without the
Experiential feeling of
It just the music of
It to play with.

No One in Their Right Mind

You're awake too! Another great scrub
Coming through.

(If it's the day
Here's a duster.)

But your face is telling me
You woke up early this morning
And this ain't your bag yet.

"I could kill you for bringing me here." Right! One
To stay in bed all day with, that.

And it's got George started: "A man
Could rape you and you'll know about it
All right, but a woman

Will break your heart and ruin your life,
The bitch." Fuck sake, George—

I can see him in that bar
In Liverpool now, dressed

Like he was ready to rob 'ouses,
A blanket on the lawn; and I was making toast

And thinking of you there ready
To be reassured—which you will be; only

Understand
That it's this sometimes.

Almost Like It's Something

You know what I'm like
By now: I tuck my chair in
Wherever I am, if only
To get closer to you
To begin with.

It's the manner with which I share this with you
That makes it seem… closer, I suppose; only now

You know what I mean? Disheartening, isn't it. I'd feel the same.

I could kill you for bringing me here though:
That's one to stay in bed with all day.

All my might not to fiddle! Just to let it *just*
About *be*! But

We are relenting. I want us closer—
Stilled. Synchronised
Regulation; which in fact
Ruins itself resting
To the side with "resting"—no:
Resting. Chill. Indifferent. Calm. Just…

…Peace. Touches. Loveliness.
You make me sound,

Feel so good but why have you done this!

Major Revision

Don't mention it.

Still

The Albanian Ionian Sea Coast
Is what you are off to see

Shortly or you are smiling. We are also
Now planning a short trip

To try and retrieve matters. You aren't smiling either!
You should definitely go. We aren't.

We… we just can't now.

Massive Five Litre

O but *now* you have more respect
For castles on hills. Perhaps it's more about
The moats? It's more about the moats, boiling

Oil sliding over the sides
That we kept together by keeping everyone
Else out the architect's epigraph: no danger; no one saw. Sometimes
We can't do it on one floor. Sometimes the archer's
Choice
Is a stretch. Not that it takes much to keep them at bay!

She visits—the damsel—
To… interact with the archer? What's all this about then?
Sounds like a good time
To sit and relax while they hash it out
All the same. No way! I'm not telling! I just saw them.

Then there's the weak
Rickety bridge over the moat straight
Into the front door—tote bags for sale
On the left; I got the idea from myself
Last Friday. The water's still full though
And essential to be honest. Yes massive five litre ones!

Another for an Audience of One

I embellished a character
So you had something to get mad at
Like near rhymes
Which I kind

Of like
To do for you at times; though sometimes?
You got me. Honest! You can't
Argue with rhymes

With itself. I mean I totally get it
Two places at once. And
Lie
As I become it.

…Green Card, Reset, Refocus, Straight Back on With It

I am fairly con-
Why do I keep doing this?

I'm pretty sure it won't seem like this to you, but there's these crippling
Moments followed by these light
No-death ones—hyphenated
If you're an audience?; the cadence
Sometimes chokes me, until…—and they come to be
Matters for us to consider in this way
Or other crippling moments that'll congeal
And pop later for the majority of us
If you've got this far—or it's already
Occurred: so good, I can guarantee
That one.

What is the most meaningful
And yet quietest gesture
They could make toward you to get the spiral going? But again, not *that* pop
Is it, despite all the fucking that's been
Insinuated.
O well;
More watercolours!

Wait… Where Was the Chorus? Just a Little Bridge, Man; That'll Do; Anything!

I'd like to thank Ed Sheeran
For successfully guiding us through all that fun; now
We're here and I haven't learned guitar still, yet with a bit
Of prestidigitation I know I'm quite capable
Of easing us into the ni…

…lne pound shake! Well it sounds similar!

I can't even say they were lies, all you said,
Standing here
Thinking about this. I was doing the same
With the tricksy flowers over on that mound
That do not settle against the hill, and now this sky,
Those clouds. I just wish

To sum up, he can't tell you
There's years of the same left either, because years?
Look how they turn, the periwinkles. O but we know *why*
They do it—where to;
They aren't your favourite? What's your favourite?
That's definitely an odd choice. Means you didn't get enough iron as a kid.
Prickly pears! Nuts addition. Get off my case
Though dude: I'm good for today now, well stocked. I know
Yeah just a little
Toot. We always ended up here
With you, don't we. It's so li…

…No! It can't be the end!
But I'm so high! I'm on the floor but that's
Common. And the sun,

The sun from here. Lord. Fuck it gimme another. Where's Ed?

"Look! He's Shitting! It's a No Brainer!"

And they're off! "Sensitive"
Is out the blocks first in this race to catch

And he's got it! He's caught the rabbit already!
Who'd

Have thought he'd have won so quickly! Joe I've not

Even had time to inform our audience

About the context of this mighty battle. I never will! Is that “Sensitive”
Coming in for an interview so soon? “Wasn’t

Going to say anything, you know what I mean, Tone? How’s
You two? The wife? Looking great, Joe!”

Joe I’d completely forgotten my name! Good job Sense spoke!
And we have to squint

To see his opponent now—I was getting to that!—
Still stuck behind the starting gate the nameless

“Dude”? Could it be “Dud”? Can’t see in the fog. Called
“Sensitive” sensitive a lot in the build up

To this saga. Laughs on cue. Will dance to survive
A second. Trains for three weeks; goes missing

For eighteen. Calls people “Sensitive” a lot. Extreme-
Ly dull. Still stuck behind the starting gate. Palpitates

Quietly. Remains very popular! many
Continuing to bet on his long odds. Reminds

Me of us, Joe, when we were unpleasant and useless though very
Loud about absolutely nothing. Guess how many times

He’s actually ran, Joe. Correct.

The (In)Complete(?) Collection of Hisoid: Champion of His World

—

Hisoid Conducting Research

Remembers some parts. Mostly doesn’t bother

—

Hisoid doesn’t bother with a title.

—

Hisoid Looks at the Diagnosis

Doesn’t relate.

—

Hisoid Has Hundreds of Titles at Once

Loves it.

___

Hisoid Leaves

The womb
Of his fantasy; and progresses;
Though forgets
Temporarily.

___

Hisoid Considers

The potential to overuse “considers” in titles,
Killing himself off already,
“The potential”, as well as that itself.
His original inspiration.

___

Hisoid Needs to Do Something

We need to get him to do something.
He needs sleep first.
He needs an agenda.
He needs to keep his original inspiration at the forefront
In all its fog.

___

I Am Not Hisoid

Hisoid… thinks…
It is hard to pin down: he removes

Himself
And steps out to see what’s about.

___

Hisoid’s First Day Interactions

Early Albert in His Sleep Trying

Dirty and sorry all the time but I’m writing
while some aren’t. Some can’t. I’ll go
all the way into it eventually. It’ll all be
on a page and I’ll be in the world and
you’ll see me. I’ll be heard and
more and more and more of them will
be and they’ll be dirty no more, I know it. I’m so sure. I’m hungry

and not sorry anymore. We aren't guilty
and small and hidden no more. Me—
us: we will be at the bar demanding shots
telling others, *I want you here and you can drink*
With me but you may need to get the fuck
Out my way first while I do what I need to do—while I bring
Myself up and out. You see, we ain't dirty
Or sorry now and we
Had to do some rotten things to get here first, so I'm getting
Served first O yes that is my name
Actually yes and I would recommend
Remembering it as I am no longer dirty or sorry; yes I'm kind of a big deal
Now but that's not the point—I want more
Of those that can't be here too.

Rather Dull

Now you are here (I'm still confused
About what it was before and where this is now set—day
Or night) you realise—embarrassingly—that you cannot be
The shaman you thought you could be
As everyone sees everything in this opposite arena; and it is only those artists
Back there in the other day or night
That have a problem with how I'm telling you. Yes—we here
See all that's not spoken of
Of the weapons we're attached with for the nuclear arms race, weapons
We begrudge being unable to use too, in case… well…
How we got here, I suppose! You
Didn't think it was a knowledge thing, did you,
Gloria? I've had it
With you and your behaviour at the annual barbecue: I've *seen*
How you look at him! And it was *years* ago! Get over it!
Kids. Kids! Come over here.
No you can't bring them yet—sorry. Tell them to stay
By the lake. Doesn't matter whether we've got one: let me
Explain that to you tomorrow, darling—I've regressed
Unfortunately just now over your Aunty Glo. I know, petal. I know. Can you get
Uncle Jeff for me please? I know he's not.
Jeff! I think…
I think I've done it
For the last time and she didn't like
The smell—could I really have ended it all
On that? I know it won't matter in the long run but
It's rather dull, no?

Two Dogs One View

Why don't I take these photographs of the view
And turn them into an REM song? Wait a minute—
That was you! How did I get in here?

Fine you left the door open. You always do that now!
Anyway I'm here with the two dogs, one

You seem to have taken a shine to

And adopted, but this other one I can't quite get to go in.
There we go; we've just been to the burning, so I'm not sure
Why you kept all your memorabilia of it. The vet said,

'Kill your darlings!' without knowing I was world building
With you, and it'd take most of us too. Still I burnt them:
They're only pets. What was left was something like poetry: difficult

To walk; flowery before a valley of chickens. Ridiculous, really! Saved me so much money.
No actually I won't come in now; take this dog: you
Were the book I wanted to read always, and I don't care

About all the other pages that ended up inside you
Because I know I write better than them all. Plus they only ruin
Your hardcover. The photo you *did* send?

That couldn't have been me, us, that put them
Together, could it? So that's why I was confused
About me being here: you'll not get in the fire with a punch like that.

It Needs Sweeping

You will not save them
Nor will you read this until well after

You've realised what we are talking about, as the poem
Finally goes as you both do.

Missing Something

Cross your tentacles and let the drips come through followed by the gas
Of what wasn't love—those damn cards—
But responsibility. And who's
The kind to say "damn"? To throw you under the parchment
Like this? I wasn't the one marking dates
To make sure you had sex with someone new each month, I only
Ensure it rests as a reflection of the materialism:
This one was a terrible boyfriend
Suddenly back to us all as if
Remembering validates the "terrible boyfriend"
We tell them about? We aren't going out on that cheap route of saying
It shifts and non-sequiturs
I said you spoke like that all the time. Appendages
Are not quite
Not quite, with them under your body at the right angle
Creating irritating eructation like that blasted
Responsibility I don't know what he speaks of: you're another day
Closer to missing out! Can we now picture the calendar? The whole
Time we were missing something, that's all.

And There Was Me With My Pitiful Stone

Hey look! Emily's
Doing her van up! Let's go see!

Hey! How's it going?
Hey too

Wayne, Scott, Bruce, Andy,
Ashley, Bob.

So...
OK I'll be off!

It's Time

Get up, walk off,
Never speak to them again.

Remainder From Long Division

Was remembering the poem I forgot about earlier again
Just makes you realise, doesn't it,
Staring at the two balls I've got in each hand, just about trusting that look now
Yet only then, then what? Couldn't conclude it
But it's freeing nonetheless. They never replied to you again;
You probably did leave them for dead. But then again.

Poetry

Just genna stand here for a bit and take some photos
Before I let the breeze take me

Away from where I was standing so I can then show
You what was seen from the angle that the photos were taken from. Can't say

Whether you'll get owt from the scenes but that's
Not why I took-um-nor

Why I let the breeze take me again just then
Only now I'm indoors

*

Keeping to myself as I edit the best photos
For the albums I'll release in future that aren't going to demonstrate
At all the nuanced headaches and tears
It takes to make such stunning cinematography
For the aurora-joining organs
Groaning as they settle like the model
Choir boy'd innocently fallen to sleep on the perfect keys.

You Gotta Hang Your Hat on Something

The expiry dates are less far off: is it filling you
Adequately? Perhaps it's time
To try something a tad jarring to the rubrics; and there
We have it. Your mouth just made it.

You've tried saying it many times
Differently to how it was first told, the face
Staying how it's held, dragging around the motivation
For this sound until we're into the third sector

Which is where I'll take you, if that makes you
Feel better? But it isn't, is it. You don't know where the card
Might be delivered and it's familiar,
That quarterly schema: you can just put your face

To one side and interlace the siphoning
Voluntarily off until it's ready to go again with the same code.

I Bet

It's a good job so many think it's *not* about doing things as simple as this,
Else this'd sound stupid, but I guess we better—yep:
Get to the end of the beginning
And start again as I think we've met before?

Well done. Thanks for getting a good look at me.

If it wasn't
For me explaining why I was in the bookmakers in the first place
You'd probably be wondering who I am, wouldn't you,
So I'm glad that's now cleared up,
Covering our bases in figurines we just have to assume
We'll find, as again, we look at the…

But that coupon was yesterday, and I'm tired of gambling.

Certainly glad I came here still. Now all I have to do
It won! Great. Next
Horse wins, was it? Like we used to play.

But I literally told you the rules
And you didn't listen. And you're here too, always.

Another (2)

"It is humiliating to remain with our hands folded while others write history."
—Benito Mussolini

"O I see your Goebbelsian
Cogs going underneath all that dyed hair; and so where
Do I sign up! Because I swear, I'll do anything

You demand!" She stares

Through pink bangs at me, unsure
Whether she likes my wit or not. "Hmm…" she says,
"Have you ever wrote copy before? As I could do
With a new bio, to go with

This new personality I've brought to town." "Sound!" I say,
"And I've done the rounds so I know what pays off
When you're swiping to get your rocks off. Though
Could you not… O! You've just cut

My cock off! I mean I knew
The dyed hair meant you're a bit odd, but this'll be a sod
To write cop-
Actually—ignore me: I've done it."

Maxwell on Len Gurts

"They're quite aware of what they're going through"
—David Bowie, 'Changes'

Ziggy stardust
David Byrne
Brian Eno
Schoenberg
Pierre Menard – luis borges
Dressing like you want to be a lesbian
Need to ask internal demons if can listen to Kanye west now
Poseur that's hates poseurs
Hoping your name will auto capitalise for everyone
All this sex you haven't been having

- what about all the pitiful times, ashamed of your body, swings from dysmorphia to Jason Bateman
- What are your appetites, Len? What spoilt it?

Postmodern shifting, unhooking consciousness, believing you can subtly Messiah without saying it
Creating a parody of yourself with how you wander around thinking that's passable as it's the mode of the 21st century, but I see you
No postmodernism – it's the apex of your narcissism's eiger north face free climb
before a fall; and you mulled on that for so long, how to say it. What it could all mean—the endless
Pathways available.
John Ashbery? No way near him
Incomprehensible glossolalia from the schizoid days, letting Ash take responsibility; trickle of blood to the penis after using "glossolalia"
Transcended something?
Debating pointing it out as an edgy list
Taking the tabooist abuse with you—definitely
Don't want me going there, do you; and making up words
Edge-lordingly.
And the pain. Shall I say what you do with the pain? You'd both hate

And love me to do that, wouldn't you, nearly as much as you'd love
Me to leave it in, as if it's something
That it is. Indecipherable determiners
Unsurely placed to cause something. "I Love Len"
Was something you considered writing too, wasn't it.
No. You aren't feeding back into this
Too reflexive. Embarrassing. Formulaic. Bends back round into obvious and you are
Obvious. Thought this was another clever, ungraspable piece, didn't you. Expected it to be more than
It's become. You have a difficulty with women,
Don't you. Drips of misogyny always. Hiding behind me? You wouldn't write the lesbian line yourself either, even if you recognise
But then you want to be in that woman's chest carrier, don't you—the same you
That's cries at night after rehearsing your self; and you'd get a septum piercing, wouldn't you.
That's how you play yourself off. You'd do it, laugh at yourself,
Then write about it like that's a performance itself.
You get bored on the way through
As you tie together more too, giving up
On another that takes some dedication, commitment,
Loyalty. Now I can feel sorry for you?—aligning
With you feeling sorry for yourself?
(Ash – could they wrestle with each other?)
So where are you?
Maybe you're dressing like your mother?
"Everyone sees what the fuck your doing, Maxwell—
Calm down."

Tiger Blood

"In everything I feel, my brain's like, "Nah""
— Fred again.., Duoteque & Orion Sun, 'ItsNotREEAALLLLLLL'

"Trouble that can't be named, A tiger's waitin' to be tamed ... Confusion never stops ... Or am I part of the disease? ... You are"
—Coldplay, 'Clocks'

Reader! It's me!

The barista
Used the plug on us before
Meeting another mad mother; we're forgetting
The *Nicomachean Ethics*! It was borrowed from us!
How'll it be lived down!

I was down, too,
Partially on hearing the news
Of the inevitable
Interval from the capsules—her shock,
Pain on discovering
A coke-fuelled
Shell
Of a plunger: not our problem.

Hear that! Not ours!

Reader! It could be you!

*

I couldn't do it. Was a mess. Seeing faces
On walls and was painting, whereas he

Was cool and willing to be anything… About
To be bitter, I was.
                It's all that abandonment stuff—

Brings up the spirals to sit on. Body's
Something to sit inside until it reg-

Nope! I
Have to do that! Stop this!

*

Balancingly. Balancingly
Whilst acknowledging it all needs going through,

Forgetting, waving at and not
Becoming
A bit part in the psychodrama

You don't know you're in: other
Marin…

Ah, forget it. We do not need…
Did not need!
Enabling.

Admit that it hurts you. You
Will not!

Early Slim Slow Slider

The last track and he would sometimes skip – fight
There were too my graves to come
I barely know what to say about it. It all sounds too sickly
She felt something of the animal. Related. Cried
Both came on a cloud just to be shown, teased,
        then pulled away
He still sometimes skips. More and more, but then less
Only a short time
There was never the acceptance of it not returning –
        of time knowing death would kill love;
        of her being outside the car, in the new one,
                on that beast

Ever so slow. Watching ever so slow for decades with no clue
There is a thing beyond sadnesses and theories
Sadder. No linear
He is trying to alter patterns. Please alter your patterns
I am beyond so broken by this path
She isn't sure of anything
He isn't sure he'd change it
Please don't slap the guitar. Please don't put anything final
(It feels like there should be something here
Try and dig in. See the dot in the distance)
There are two of them now, as I've no idea where I am either

Jeff Bezos and Glamorous Lauren Sanchez Island Hopping in Greece

As blind schizophrenics do silent battle in the middle over chunks of metal, you
With your steady face remain outwardly consistent
In your corner of the artistic space
Speaking to no one as a means to take those blind,
Correct, dripping through aged minutiae
Unmacroed, yet wholesale: you fancy a chunk of metal yourself! You fancy
A wall. Owning the circumference. But then it wouldn't be a shape? Probably

A good time for you to end things
Coming at you live from our new studio where you can win
What you've got! You've won!
It always feels like th- But

We've shot him. Lunatic and no longer offered a lot—a great runner
For the show at one time. Look at everything *we've* done
For *you* though! That outside? What outside? That's
The surround sound reverberating from the freezer aisle being restocked. And I can drive
right through it now!

Dear Mother, I Have More News!

"And I thought of Ma and I wanted to get back there"
—David Bowie, 'Five Years'

Mother! Another letter! I was confused, or perhaps just hasty?

Though they've told me about the boomer ellipsis…

Mother. It wasn't the boy. He was ridiculous.
It was how I was regarding the world

Outside myself, and what I thought they'd give me.
I know my place. I know how to make

This work. It'll all work in my favour! O mother!
Mother!

Mother why didn't you tell me? He really was a car crash.

Monster As You

I'd rather not be coming out of the hierarchy—because I feel I am
Right about now, but I don't know how long post
Takes nowadays and I'll be writing more letters
And sending them out today, this week,
Don't you worry—with an elusive "you" attached
That gets on my nerves (that was easy!) and causes me to talk
To people still in the hierarchy, which may only keep them there more
With beards, because I've been buying mirrors
And leaving them at my old addresses; but I guess I am
Coming out of it with these interesting antique plates, I'm told,
To offer now as a way to differentiate what could have been delivered
With your *postcard*—which all this could have been—
By your standard postie, only I used a startup service
That's due to go defunct once they get all the problems sorted
In the national offices, not that they'll be called national offices
By then. They won't be called anything.

You know what I've done, don't you. Is there a phenomenon
Labelled for this yet, because I slip
Between letters all the time and I hardly remember who I'm writing for. I'd much
Rather listen to myself when I'm like this,
Because then I wouldn't send voice notes to persons I do not want to
Anymore; hang on. Voice…
What?

Someone is on the other line. No I don't have a smart phone.

Absolutely no chance it's him calling, no—I said "you": it means
I'm still taking my time, though his influence
Over the other legal documents I have been sending out
Is lessening, and I'm getting better with email and will soon
Be in a position to only send out kindly, timely reminders
About how time has passed, but how that is fine—we all
Took different paths; and how I am happy
With my stamp collecting. Yep; it's my little thing—you've
Yours.
Really?! Still *that*
From sch-

I mean, you've yours, again—yep; that's nice.

Monster

"I'm so glad I've found this"
—Editors, 'Munich'

When's the other half of my face going to load? You know
I'd ask him, but I think he was asleep
Like I was when he did it too, so how he'd know: sometimes

Just like then, it comes back to me in bed unannounced

Does the dizziness of these entrances, a mix
Of feelings still only now

I experience nearly all of them; and I'm gaining
More hilarity with this, so when the face
Does grow you can expect all kinds

What are they this time? I shouldn't eat toast in bed—
Leaves crumbs. Do you realise how many
How much the change of plans

Did for the TV listings? I haven't got a TV. No one is shocked.
This has given me so much confidence.

Blatant Riddle

You've been looking back over him, haven't you—
The water carrier. The too-long-thought-out extras,
Simply put. Yet

He's in his coffin, dead. Nothing doing. Bet
You look again though. Bet you look back over him
When initially you were indifferent, annoyed

With him. I know you by now. Have come
To see you passing these ways
Many times. Embarrassing. Not like he bothers

The rest of the graveyard, is it: dig them up!
If you end up here again I'll know about it, waiting
For you to confirm our existence

Again by you coming to know it truly as well
As you get it closer.

Before the Rest of the Beavers Woke up at Camp

Another day comes to
On the sofa this time without Shaggy
Or questions about the remains of the day, how that don't
Quite make clear… but a hand here
And a hand there, this questionable cough,
Is something going to…
Not sure what that could be
If we keep it that way. Another filter
Lifted from the screen that had strings—
As all do—going up to the sky,
Not coming down.

As the Cliff Edge Is Again Folded Into a Tissue

You temporarily left the dream
To count things and everyone was voluminous and political

From what they could remember,
“It’s not real!” when they couldn’t, practising laughing
Ready for the great cry they also
Couldn’t remember trying each night;
But it was so awkward: back you went to the dream, tempted

To stay awake now and then
To try one more page
In the middle of the hill…
Nah. Well
You’ve seen them once
And pointed out the many peaks and angles
Of the horizons available as they may *appear*
To one, not that I’m one

Anymore. O I’m
So much more. Yep—
Sooooo much mor-

You’ve put yourself in the middle again, haven’t you: lucidity
Does not necessarily entertain
Pellucidity, you know. In fact it becomes

Too prolix; and we go back! Disgusting! Minutes! Thanks!

Another Another Green World

I read the thing twice. I didn’t understand it.
Afterward, my aim

With the water from the kettle was way off. I’m trying.
It’s not connected. Will this round up

The exploration obviously not—these matters
Come apart as soon as they try to give them to me,

The ones that are full, unlogicing
About knowledge. Makes my blood boil.

Perhaps like the kettle, yes, tossed
All over the side and down the cabinets.

The main one: he stayed behind
Once all the others had gone very formally. I was

Confused but he’d committed: “Some of what
You feel sticks to these symbols. The flickers you see: they’re

Absorbed and disintegrated.” “I am late
For something I’d rather not explain,” I said:

That was when I became one myself.

A Woody Plant Is a Plant That Produces Wood

I know every bit of the tree now—I can't be arsed
To go into it. Guessing I have a treehouse? I was
Guessing but you can too, sure. From here

Guessing I'll drop leaves—obvious—
Saw off branches and offer little bitsa bark
To go with them at the right time, for your sake: I'll hang

Them down and you can make a fire. Not making one up in a tree, am I! Yes I used to.
Yes I'm safe up here. Glad you saw it
That way. Shit I was giving you branches

And leaves, wasn't I! Loadsa slabs
Bricks concrete around, I know. Some
Still get planted between them sometimes I guess? If not

Plant your own. No that's it. I know you can do it. Fine I'll
Wave from here but this is my tree. Thanks, but it finds your analysis irrelevant.

Morning Routine

I start the timer and the kids in this skin
Steady my pen here first: they won't let me comment
On that sound—no smart referral
To what's inconsequential; as I'm cross-
Legged on the floor with the tears they push in
Instantaneously, the eyes staring straight ahead, the body
Not feeling, thinking, barely,
Mostly watching what must be quite a run
Inside to catch up. I'm curious who'll win. It changes every day,
Second. One of them bites my tongue
For us more and controls
The one less cleverly. He's not an arsehole.
I don't know his story, where he's been.
He allows for all kinds of sounds, pisses
Another part off, at times—knows
They split off with their own balloon heads around that room
At other times but the less
Exactly. Exactly. Horrible taste in our mouth, the shelf
I'm staring at more and more wonderfully predictable. Somewhere
Back there some bits got lost but who cares—pieces of lint
In the universe of that room
Those times coming to here. What're you watching?
Dunno. I mean, not sure. Though he only incorporated
Reflexivity once, thank fuck.

Create Your Own Banner

"This seems to be the place I need to get to, in terms of
"I'm here", but there's the old film
Over the top of it all with its ability to tighten

The nerves distinct from any experiential nonsense, the dull hum
Even duller of slavery or similar—it's all the same now": it depends
On the pitch of all that though, that's the problem,
Because this place does come very flat,
So I can't say what I intend it to be for you. Indifferent?
What did I expect to carry on for; why did I assume
I still could? Because it seems to be the rule
That we must? I feel that too. What a pain. Can you visualise
The removal of it, then what appears,
Is heard at any given moment,
Accounts for what? Is this why I returned—this "inspiration"? No. No I'd like
A refund on the whole lot, please, including
The candles.

More Hearts of the Matter

Between these schizophrenic severances
Displayed as self-referential songs, surreal
Narrative, consciousness expansioners—sure;

Not even a word again—far down

Is an ache for touch, a longing for intimacy
I don't want to contort for rhyme. I don't want to think

About this. I don't want to do these any longer.

Why Poetry

It don't take much of this guff
To see it's potentially all love, once

You face forward, that is; but hey! debate
Can be more fun

To shock—stun—some
To get them here

(And here, without it being known that quite literally…
O it doesn't matter); only compare

"This experience with this one, loves"
Says the poet, to discover that's

More than enough
To see we've all got stuff; and that

We fall
More into love, or not.

Waiting for Bus to Load for School Trip

Forgetting: shunned—development stunted;

They'll have us saying all sorts—we're cunted.
Have us Finneganing daughters, history
Halters again in the delusion of ought

To hold on to this new consciousness,
For it makes us mightier, split
Between stanzas unclear to you—come here!;
Expand your mind with more

Shit. Away, away sails this ship
Of discrete, subtle, bubble underneath
Of what previous? like holding a watch
Dropped: where did it go then? We just didn't look

Sir. I think we're all here…? I'm here if
You are, staying, going, getting off if you are.

<u>On Re-blocking on New Accounts</u>

Love, unanalysed
For some, is a continuation of destructive familiarity
Which, to a poem, makes a dire opening
And more of the same of itself, though necessary
For that very same some, I reckon. Are we done?
I am:

Feel those suicidal feelings—terrors—
Aches—cravings until they dissipate; devotions
Alone you let play from afar, may touch you
Now and then still and with which you may again
Touch yourself, understandably weak
Moments: O well. Next time.

Getting steadily acclimatised
To outside the cave—new symbols: that's all it is, loves.

<u>I Slobber and Grunt</u>

"I see porn dogs sniffing the wind, sniffing the wind for something new"
—Underworld, 'Mmm…Skyscraper I Love You'

After Stan Rice, 'H.D.'

You lied that they filled you with life
As you left the room
With them dripping out of you, words
You didn't understand and regret now

Seeing the mighty 'scrapers—what do they look like, eh—
Touch on something it's pointless to compete with.
Where to go from here? You join

The great flow and go as your own, outside

Seen as… who knows. Does it matter?
What'd you have done
With all those edits anyway, mostly terrible.

You sink below slobbers and grunts
To serene and growth, as it still falls out
To your own notes.

Rattler

Here they come, the fake trainspotters
Of the fake trains that run between the islands
Always having bad weather; and when they run the trains

From here the tracks sound pants, the passengers
Livid at the random stops. It's where Oakwell
Bought a coke and said he was going to hold his nose for the rest of the journey—you just try and stop him.

I enjoy the trains though (not the spotters
So much; and they disappear as quickly as we first
Liked seeing them when we were first

Stuck on that first island) awful
Driver today too. Why don't they just put a better dome
Beneath the clouds? If I remind you

About the time we discussed this idea before (there) will you stick
Around for when I inevitably bring this exact thing up again in future, only with said domes, only slightly

Differently? It's not usually a rattler, no. It has been? You're
Hot? OK it is. Or delayed.

Who Needs Actions

You take the heavy metaphors off the shelf and disappear
To the skip again
In silence
Leaving twelve of them behind, you waiting
For her to write new books correctly: you hold the door
Open, not looking back through,
Not looking around staring straight ahead as a shiver
Comes through, the remains of refraining from putting more up there yourself: these protected

Hard wood floors are a massive help, are they not?—
For sliding out of here as more spills out
Than you'll know what to do with, way beyond any old scripture,
Parental advisor stickers you can't print anymore, thinking surely
A few of the twelve will pull it together
Enough to figure and ignore the Holy Father inside her.

The Projectionist

I kind of get what the problem is
Now I don't work in the booth as a projectionist,
Not that I need to explain that now either, though it worked
In more ways than one, because they actually

Placed the booth between two screens so films could be shown each side, I mean. The
things I saw.
And the films!
So yeah now it's all digitalised and people aren't concerned
For how some things are put together

I see what's annoying and enjoy it anyway, being the editor
Of a small magazine as I am now, so small
The pages of our editions sometimes disintegrate through my fingers
As I carry the one copy I produce up our one customer's

Driveway. He's lovely too. Always takes it on the chin
If… yep!: if it *does* disintegrate, because it seemingly doesn't happen every time.

Mutual Masturbation

"Such attics cleared of me! Such absences!"
—Philip Larkin, 'Absences'

O Poem: I read your ways
Of creating me (of circumventing myself)

As a means of mirroring away history—the great
Healing (that's spelt

"Forgetting")—and I know your love
Spelt "silence" like this need not make sense

Outside ourselves; and the rooms we visit
Together on trips to then be shut behind us

Before we fuck in the next (it can be assumed)
Can be… shut behind us: clearly

I do not always listen to this
As they're left open for others to enter

And do as they wish with, while we…
Together trip further, I feel:
O no you can

Drive this time; OK—
Not a problem.

Toy Medium

Without all these rivers and seas (let's imagine
They are pools of pain or pages) there would be

No bridges and I know you love bridges, triumphant
Bridges which your enemies can fall

From in confusion over the nuanced names on the plaques.
I also used to hover around bridges

Believing the supports up
From the water or down from the air were doing so much—that I had to remember them;

Consistently share the information—but that's impossible.
The guide is a renegade and used to work

At a fair: where can I buy some candy now? This peaceless
Land I'm done with the tours—they are finished;

Whether it be now or your tomorrow
You'll invent a river to cross inside yourself

So old it'll look outside, and thus proudly you'll cross.

Private Lift

As more childish wallpaper falls
Leaving less potential suitors—the few gaps between them—
And perverted, murderous stares back
When you aren't in the mood you have to rebuild the arcade again
However you wish; though you'd like them to have finance: now

They have finance; and now that stops the old paste
Trying again further: isn't redecorating difficult?
I plenty get the joins

Not in line but why worry
When you need these odd jobs less
Considering you now build the house; no! Someone else

Does it for you how does it look? Fascinating.
Do you think
The bare walls work then? Mirrors? Been done.
Made us sick.

You try to spell house
Without "house" and put up doorframes
Only that'll allow anyone in—all kinds

Over the cracks: they throw themselves in the concrete
Foundations—look!—
So you build six more floors and a private lift.

One Of Those

Cannot get near it, but it's near me all the time
Dictating futile connections from the off,
Pathetic shifts, glorious colours across my retinas O,
Etc., bitternesses and calling all spades

Silly names like Dug—anything but him—to have other nonsenses
Enthralled near me for the few years we pretend we aren't merely tolerating.
Clearly I'm so in control and it's passing through
As I am able to refrain from even recording

A fictional rape now: only touched on;
Such progress. Though I can't remember where I got to—
Where I'm at. Like it matters. Do we go from left to right
And down the page? Noticed this time I started eating loads of shit

Last week: what about you? Since then I've been fantasising
Vilely and without agency about everything but who it surely couldn't have been?

Lil Jig

You will only improve going one way, and that is not
Back to him or her, or up the mountain
Quickly or at sea: you must
Go within your-

Selves and rid those selves
Of history, only not as they know it, false
Endings repeating down through time
That will go, too,

You'll find
Every now and then when you have to notice,
Re-clean, once the painful work is done. Nothing

Else will clear the path
Within time, taking them both—these lines—
Leaving the climb to flow steadily on its own.

More (Or Less) John Chapman

After Mary Oliver

I want to be more John Chapman
Without whispering—believing—

My worst John Chapman things; as it was only one,
Once—several times

Perhaps and I can't ache,
Weep,

For the touch of more than trees
Much longer. I sit in this cafe

Feeling primitive as I want to tear
The waitress down to the floor and press

And cry against her—that's
All. She can probably sense it. They build

Up do our requirements, almost
Excuses:

I Google what "cold white fire" could mean.

We're Gonna Have a Problem Here

Mac DeMarco! They weren't from Alaska!

I'm so out of time.

The Moon

I've never thought about those trainers, yet could I…

O and now I've done it; how I've done it O I feel the connection to their soles, the sole the ground, the ground they've raised me above ever so slightly towards the moon (I am trying them for the first time in the dark; by the way I bought some). Stand on my toes? Stand on my toes and feel the same, only slightly more, and then someone on you and more and more until I'll be in pain, but we'll be elevated, and I'd have started it but it was the trainers. I'd have started it but it was his shoes, slightly more

Expensive than these the ones he had I should add. Are they the same? They are his and mine are mine, of course. Fucking philosophers.

Down the Aisle

Robert Hass. Sylvia Plath.
The list is vast. Now what have I done?

I need to remember
The items I want to purchase in the supermarket in a unique way
("Supermarché" do you say? OK!) and every piece
Has a corresponding name for something else I want to do: d'you see
My eyebrows? O boy.

By the lake, though,
The paddle board, a daughter
And/or son grieving, the capturing of the final
Light in a way I'm putting my finger on
In your words, it cresting
Nicely only you looked the other way just as it did so
So I had an excuse.

Apples. Simple pleasures. The dreamy walk
To get them. I wished we'd have stayed that way

Swimming forever. I turned and you had gone.

Haha

S'like dropping a coin
You didn't know you had down the back of the sofa

And looking for it forever (or always
Running from finding it

Unawares?); and then

Finding it (they still make these?) and it's
Worthless (certainly not a collectors item), yet it's

Determined everything you've bought
In your life so far (and all you've gave—

Been given?) and perhaps

Will forever; and you really,
Really don't like what you bought, gave out or was given or the coin.

Sound Advice

I close my eyes to feel the music and your face comes
As now flat and repetitive content that I'll be drafting
Further sunflowers from for the foreseeable,
No doubt because the children still try to bind
A past together that is not there—'twas Saturn
Devouring instead, kids!—and so the children insist
On persisting with flowery efforts;

Whereas they could just leave me
To sense your drift
As I make the gap left perhaps a triangle? I believe

The intention is obvious: the shape represents
The eternal, though momentarily those
Parts of me enjoyed the notes
It was such a beautiful performance.

Is History

"I got a girlfriend that's better than this
But you don't remember at all
As we get older and stop making sense"
—Talking Heads, 'Girlfriend Is Better'

“I’ll just use naked pictures of myself
To get someone else—ha!” she’ll say
To you in the kitchen
When you go to collect your things (you
Moved out; she got to stay) from the flat
You once shared with someone
That looked exactly the same as her.

The rest, as they say,
Is waiting for her to start a healing blog.

What the Tenured Professor Said After the Heart Attack

I don’t think there’s a problem with beauty being a valued asset
Superficially simultaneous with getting out of the way,
Him staring at the ground, microinfringements
He now collects and picked that jumper.

You would gather
Him to suckle for how smartly he removed
The charger: am I warming?
I have all these little protracting tools for calculating

What was lost. What you’re to do more with.
What’s retrieved and aside from the schematic
That initially bore um.

Shoulders/Arms

There has been a teenager sleeping in his local football stadium, the one stand,
Waving at you this whole time while he considers
How he was frozen staring not wishing
Her to be the mother of his children, but he couldn’t leave. Taking into account
Your own bookshelves, we can see
How irritating this may be for you, wanting matters to fit
Around the steadily opening clouds
More steadily—how we wish clouds hadn’t been picked;
Though this allows you any kind of weather you wish already by now.

The Real Poem With You

I am interested in the way that yellow butterflies
Do whatever they were about to do, apparently,

In a thoughtful, now-here way,
That I did not have the nous to see

Before because I was concerned about you
And love so much that I was crippled, but I am now correctly

Released from those things—love;
Copulation: I’m aware; but it was more

Then, though unimportant—wrong—now, all the work mine;
And the butterflies

Have been here this whole time
Waiting to accept me, as they were

Always as a child, too—a bulb—when they were merely
Other mothers—all potential

Mothers; as the world
Around them patiently

Cockily patiented to engulf me in its setting also
To release me once again in some other matter

As it now attempts; and sorry there are other
Dancing envelopes out there today too, through this

Steamed up window, it being… just
Gone midnight—such light!—

My kettle being poorly placed again; though

I'm still doing it for you, in some minor way.

He Weeded the Garden

The bottlenecked boogies kept the feet fixed and the hips lying. Mini needed out of the swamp; she knew she'd regret agreeing instead of a water feature.
Him, away on business, returned to find Mini'd had the lot filled in with inner tubes. In the front garden were stiletto scratches in a circle; no path joined or led away down to the lake, a Hockney splash mistaken for doubt as he weeded the driveway.

Lunch Break

Is he really going to say it like this: for want
Of a better word for "poems", poems
Come to me as if they are rain (I'm wincing)
Or sunsets or the shopping I deliver, fixed

In the trays that I put at the user's feet (this blurs
The fiction with the exercise going on
Right now with the exercise occurring earlier);
And I used to be a scientist

With microscopes and/or telescopes (don't hold me to them
Either), and when I was doing those
Kinds of exercises I was using the same "rain"
(I can see that now) to put the knowledge

Discovered across in the way expected
Of that discipline
(I sometimes strayed);

Though I am trying to progress continually

With these new experiments and the weather they induce
(I was involved with quantum mechanics,
Though I shan't go into that: it was hard
To stand still I think it had an impact or I at least thought

It did).

The Last Photo of Him Alive

"Well something's lost, but something's gained"
—Joni Mitchell, 'Both Sides Now'

A lot of lollipop
People on the way to tender, isn't there.
No—tender I said.

You will not be sure where else to visit
To put off what taut shoulders up all day;

And yes you noticed. And no you aren't impressed
With that awareness anymore.
And yes you can feel the memories away from certain
Contexts, the education
Nearly done and safe: you can see
Why they do it
That way, not for everyone, but the methods
For showing our workings are always improving

Though not for everyone: you are better than you were yesterday.

As We Choose

"At sunset there is a choice of two smiles: discreet or serious."
—John Ashbery, 'The Serious Doll'

Now I want you to feel moved
Into something feeling chronological
The kitchen was visited, something happened in there,
Someone was potentially saved, really,
Really abstract pedalos on the greenery,
Bluey hued lake, bluey hued landscape,

Now I am too together seeming that I cannot take
You back to that also without you noticing, playing
Your sums to you as you sleep. The chef

Decided to be different
Using honey: they shutdown;
But what a leaving party!

I realise these are not the recipes we came to expect

If they ever were, as I dribble
In them after your mouth is closed, just

As your stomach is settled. Doesn't seem
Like they're in threes now, does it;
Though the fountains—that

Still—we forgot are still there and we could really
Opt for a whatever we wish now, the movement
Rid, us left with the food, picking

As we choose.

SHS

Super healer Simon squeezed another session in before football. "Tell me everything," he said to her, "quickly because kick off is very, very soon, though I think we can do this." And so they did, and then Simon scored and the game was won and he ran to the stand to celebrate; and she'd made it – her first – and she blew him a kiss as she swung her scarf and despised him.

Fantastic Title

But do the curtains match the drapes?
O here we go: the biographers
Conjecture the period we were editing under
Now to hypothesise which loop
Was being pulled back through, influencing,

The jaunty stabs. Fading lights
I am under that absorb
No stick, shock value of myself, myself,
How I long for less of everything: these are only

The things I talk about. They aren't how we live.
How does a man
Dodge himself forever—hmmmmmmm; not sure
How long you'll make that noise, but this one
Momentarily here before a fridge lift is weighed by sutin.

...And You Honour Your Whims

Dad's Shortcuts

Once you're on what others call a path, a process—
What you barely call walking anywhere; you'll lie
About being on a motorised vehicle too—you can postulate
Hundreds more avenues knowing they're as real as Santa, the avenues
They do represent, though that's representation—
It even sounds a bit off: sniff it? that too; and if it's an away day

Lunch from the office you'll be really promoting them
Around this failed punk you're threatening to play out: don't

Be upset. OK you weren't; you saw it
And all itis ironic, is it? Then there's a six minute talk

On irony and we can't stay here for the rest of the afternoon, can we?
These minor distractions you zoid
For yourself remaining ignorant to where you shouldn't be, tying
Your laces—*must* they fall that way?—still no helmet.

Alex Yee Has Closed the Gap to Hayden Wilde

That's right: you've learnt
The calculator comprehensively to the point that you can't
Even really talk about it. Now all that's left
Is listening to everybody tell you about all the sums
You didn't know you didn't know about, only you can't
Tell them that either—you just
Gotta listen; the face
On you found in the calculator
Shop. What a gas! Might

As well say stuff like "gas"!
Yet it gets you all heightened
Like before without a notice so you slip
Into convos with other calculator engineers—half trained ones—
And that'll fuck you over again and bend
The face you paid good
Money for. It did stop
That particular store owner
Finding out about the Wendy House though: more gas!—

When you coulda been with him in that death trap.

Napolita

The child tapping its teacup
In the cafe through symphonic gossip—
The child tapping its teacup
In the cafe through symphonic gossip: here

I could live feeling bugg-

Charged for extra beans
That replaced my mushrooms: I feel
Only tension leave;

And noise
Replace noise as insects dissolve, presumably.

Stream of Narcissusness

Horrid title; and finally the time has arrived
For all of us to offer you everything without concern
But concern for how the croci face (all of me)

The direction they do without confirmation of where they be—

The flicking between of parts
Importantly handed to my sensitiveness,
Like something I see out the window—O imagine;
Like something matching my Rossetied voice.

Of course, the spirit must come to me
For you like this in its anthropomorphic nature, for it speaks
Only secretly as a spliced inner child departing its Sartre
Stage; and the lyricism comes through late

I'm afraid whilst demonstrating my separation
From you also; though I still wish to pass this on without ~~the aforementioned concern~~ a care
for your… concerns about it, my authenticity excluding thesauruses also.

Missing a Pull String

Nursed too wrong,
Inaccessible song

Belched out
As misdirected shout—

Alogia
Appearing later

Between fits, stupor,
Of the chronic doer:

The hands of the world are measuredly open
For these frozen babies to thaw

Themselves into, the odd
One or two debutants

That make it late, layered up,
Talking in tongue and seeing

The past everywhere like a rag doll missing
A pull string.

A Split Second Before He Came on Stage

These people don't know. These people don't know what I *think*
All *day*. What it *means*
To be *passionate* about *causes* and how they *impact*
It was ever so funny. A real… jive, man,

Out in the undergrowth of the city. The four of us
Completely traumatised and not
Necessarily very open, was I, with what I was saying

To him: there could have been three? Irritated; no—
So *angry* I was that I told her all
About what I was doing and cared about and that we consummated the thing.

Run to the Rescue With Love

All the poems are landing in tissues today, sorry,
My nose sore,

My mind clear like the connection
We cannot really talk about

Is real, like whatever
Comes out in these tissues was. In a world

Where snot poems are senseless,
It is still so risky of me to tell you about how much quiet love

I must feel

As we walk around the park together
Because he and she and they said this: folded

Into the bin too, I'm afraid. I won't say anything.
It doesn't really matter, does it:

O girl I want you to be alright, but I think
I'll be seeing you again next time anyway: more

We cannot talk about or explain. My fingers
Are covered in curry sauce.

I didn't wash my hands!
The monk walked in and put sandals on his head! Hilarious! When

But it doesn't really matter really, does it. None of it.

Jury's Out

They placed some words about the ruin
And in my emptiness
I moved myself along with them

Thinking of you—all moods and faces—
Where I didn't have to think
No concern about illusionary models

See you later: the sitting outside
Of still no progress
Rupture of a poetic form

We did talk about it, how
There is not another way for us

To be closer

More than we are,
The model sentencing us.

Purple Hearts

Predisposed
To manipulators of the world: the content

Grows (sometimes poems) as I
Float

Above the condition. Then
In the kitchen

I jump and freeze if someone
Walks in

To become the poet
I talk about.

Spirituality

Again, straight ahead,
Away from a bit of you

To what I've got no clue about,
But feels correct to do.

Then You Go Buy Them

Now that you have finished your self-karaoke, you go back
Over the lyrics to finally begin them
Finding ghost writers and no one filming this whole time,
An indifferent crowd. You leave the bar
Hysterical with no one bursting out after you: you re-enter
The bar and leave hysterical again and no one bursts out after you still.
You try a new song; and what are genres! You'll create your own! Glossolalia:
You practise
Pronouncing it but this brings more issues
Of US, UK English and trying comedy
Momentarily: everyone used to laugh at you! Only that doesn't fit
Anymore and it appears sixteen people have been planning your wardrobe.
Nothing is behind you. In front of you is an emergent blizzard
Defined by rules you know inside out, though only on paper
You haven't yet felt. You must navigate poor visibility whilst strapping on snowshoes now,
barely
Able to tie your own laces, which makes no sense
Considering all your shibari drawings; though
You're really good at those! Let's start by selling those.

There's No Excuses, My Friend

You cut the first 33 chapters to leave bereft characters
And an 'alf-baked and unintentional imperfectly rhymed narrative

So you say. You see pitiful excuses all around you
In the other unsuccessful attempts tossed at,

Floated from the ceiling light. The security theatre
Scene meticulously developed to go nowhere

Did so. All kinds of phoney coupling in the drafts
And research failed: you've fallen on improved use for them

Perhaps.

With no back story, the story
Is now for an author that has free reign

Not only to decide the volume, but their breakfast,
Daily routine, lifestyle,

Future and no-need-to-justify cadences—inclusions. The memories
That influence the protagonist.

They sit and wait staring at the desk
Disciplinily, the drafts

Burning themselves off—
Not hanging around—the book

Not necessarily writing itself
For public consummation, but O well: it means

No sequels and the ceiling
Is right there to be touched

Upside down without explanation: the words
Fail them, they realise,
Reevaluate, staccatoly

Splashing the sky with paint and exhibiting that, a turn-

Stile on the study.

You Say That Everything Sounds the Same

"We have no problem with the fact that Submittable allows poets all over the world to send us their poems, freely. But there is a problem with the fact that we have to read huge numbers of poems while searching for content for the magazine. Can I take the risk of asking that poets tick through this checklist before pressing Send?"
—The Rialto, *'Interim Newsletter 08/08/2024' [email]*

Survival Mode
No hope
No vocab
Back to the bag!

Bumblebees and Their Ways

We all like the ones that look to be crumbling, though only a few see it early. It's like spitting gum in the bin once the lid's downing. That's why you need one of them in-sink macerators – it's why I knocked. And I can see you already recycle: the gate was open.

Talking Perfectly Loud

The valleys of crumbled papers, then,
Related and discarded

Raise eyebrows as stood on generationally
By safer nauses

Galloping on courses
Built upon cut-up manure too, it is

Alleged. Might as well play
With the barriers more? Perverted

Traffic comes
Along this way on them, these

Diverted binders
Doing enough referentially: the least rich

Benefit from your flying visit today
To these depths, as you

Turn without purpose
To the homeless, once,

On your route home
Before hill-fooling us both.

One. More. Pint.

Just as you leave the floor
To attempt your debut jeté, your previous
Best friend appears and disappears
On you grounding the twelve attempt, similar
To how they disintegrated as you shared your favourite poet
This afternoon. Her splayed out in frog pose
Is in your throat struggling to clear
Tomorrow morning as you take out and put back
The sugary cereal which is closer and closer
To its use by date: you build your breakfast for six minutes instead. You tell

Yourself you will be a successful performer,
But that only increases
These colds and how everyone laughed at you next week
In class: you're so stupid thinking you'd do it all in one go; no one

You don't shut away, but you are silent
For a day or two and protective,
Measured with your movements—unnecessary
Technical information falling into the waste—
As you first leap, have a great class,
Then work towards your goals inducing the red
Head of your dreams to walk in
Right there in front of us, you—here;
Only you glanced
At the teen as you spun around and the red head had
The wrong class and god—who had left:
Your best friend's nickname because of that inside joke—
Texts. The cereal is gone the following evening.
A sprite visits you on the way home.

Let's Push Things Forward

"'Someone Wearing Sunglasses Indoors' is a poignant reflection on the complexities of artistic creation and the impact of trauma. Through its fragmented structure, defensive tone, and rich symbolism, the poem invites readers to question the demands placed on artists to reveal or justify their processes. It also raises broader questions about the ethics of consuming art that originates from personal pain, challenging the reader to consider what should be kept private and what can or should be shared."
—ChatGPT

Those are now ~~musings~~ details for a private room
With a recliner to envelope
And evaporate them and need not be shared

Poetically, the gatekeeper
To the empty fields staring
Blank thinking of dinner,

After school club, swallowing.

Needs a Name

You see the life events destined to materialise for each person around you, their chosen
course,
And you aren't sure whether you should be writing about them, but you need
A way to move them away creatively to begin with
For peace, which may change the life events destined to materialise for each person around
you,
And you aren't sure whether to write about that rather elevated phenomena either.
Confessions

Delivered in comatose states make up your journals, filtering,
Flobbing into limbed poetry and a blurred, unsettled ontology

You cannot escape, nor help but realise. It makes for detached
Presents for the characters and fascinating
Futures for those to come studying these characters. You reduce

One into a medical framework even now.

Death Row Inmate

The external things my body does—
The walking to work, the dishes,

The split-second research projects—
Come and fade

I don't care, I play
Them out until they finish themselves,

Something new
Comes up there's always something

To do outside: I can end up
In it, but mostly I'm

Waiting for less
Paralysing, tricksy things

To happen.
If I'd not

Put me here
I wouldn't even be thinking of them—how switched

Off
I am. Gotta get some bits

Together sorry gotta plan
For what's next: got my goals.

You Can Be Watched

Miss was handing out the
Exam papers. Odd Sue

Turned around to
Me and said, "You can be watched

To death. My cousin's
Got it bad and

Ain't even dying in
Fact she's just going

Plain mad. I

Just watch them

Watching and take
No notice you

Got a big dick?" Miss
Waited

For me to
Answer: "Do you

Have a pen then, Craig,
Or not?" Odd

Sue then flashed me.

Ideation

"I never give you my pillow
I only send you my invitations"
—The Beatles, 'Carry That Weight'

I am not going to do it: I am out
The woods in the snow with all the wiggly bottoms
To avoid—they're quite clear;
Down through pain I move like a war cartoon

In a shredder small enough to be blended; the stubborn
Piece of spinach that's never removed, am I, this
Bit that talks
Watching the one watching. The "never made plans"

No mark floats along with us,
Woes and spikes at substances and can't fuck, stares
Waiting for the origin to stop—save: that's
The pain all faceless; he's here

Too determined just to be
As irritating as possible, peering over
His shoulder winking: imagine it—this
Motormouthed pacifier pillow princessing

Off his noose as the tree surgeon you never knew you needed.

Bit Serious!

The glitches to the left, though, make me want to paint memory
To do away with it so it stops making it all so wordy
And pointless, and countable and analysis. That is what it is
To sit as much as possible in the stupidity
Of an experience "wide" to you like it thinks it's important, crucial,
Critical, explaining through shame like the boy
The morning after what's already gone away. It isn't

Playing with the food but playing with the lack on the plate,
The crack, the spit your told to eat, the fat
Cut off the mouldy seepy meat you don't know what to do with. How would I know how to
eat right now? I'm regressing.
I'm mixing the dark hues. I'm looking for something better than important, crucial,
Critical I'm not stupid, I just like making it sound that way
Sometimes as it's the best thing to have some control
Over when you know you're about to heave in a ball on the floor.

On Studying Pound

"One missed soothe:
A postmodernist tune.

A baby's cry contorting
A curriculum."

Well I'm the Only One Here

For a brief time I was a taxi driver;
I could voice questions to the passengers in the back

Through a clever device and they couldn't answer back
As I couldn't hear them—didn't want to—

There being no speaker in the cab; nor was there a window
Between us, only frosted glass

With photos of me on it
Facing them: the stills

Stuck there by previous passengers.
You'll never believe this

Either now or maybe
You will—nope: don't tell me!—but I cannot remember

A single thing I asked them:
It was a great job

For a *very* brief time, I should add, and I was praised
And ridiculed in equal measure. What must I have looked like!

Mutual agreement: I wanted to take
Everyone for a ride, but the taxi—

The very contours of the vehicle, *not*
This driver: it could only support so many

Despite my horn. Yeah horn! Beep beep beep beep beep! You see I knew you'd like that bit.
Yeah sure! If I do it again. Hmm—probably about your other favourite taxi drivers?
I know! That's the point.

Someone Wearing Sunglasses Indoors

But what need for the pencil sharpenings, the Philippa Gregory novels
Stacked high, the drafts? That would be like me describing
How I ate my breakfast on the morning of the day I was raped—trivial
Information. It isn't even arguable.

My process is my process is my process;
And I wouldn't want you to consider
The time and effort it really takes
To get here, as that would be unfair. Wouldn't wish on worst enemy.

Though I sit here indifferent
To the toing and froing of others who are trying to leave the fetishised stage
Of the instrument. I'm waiting for them to just *use* it
For goodness' sake, without the anxiety of including

What got them to the point where they are explaining
The very thing they should *not* have been exhibiting in the first place: my first piece, too,
bombed terribly!

After Ideation

Has to block mother
In case she gets horny. He's ever

So in control of the widening rhythm
Today on the bus

He places himself, grandfather's knuckles,
That ice cream

Up through the toes, remaining disrespectful
For you, Polly

Allowed a mention from the bathroom,
All the facets

Of the journey before he gets
To class to deliver

Algebra, contusion,
Balloon's edges: it's a fine

One this morning for a pirate's life—as good as any—humming

Could be Polly
Those stories from the sink

Briefly fogging the mirror; though if she shares

His breath—holds still—
He'll let her back in.

On the Fly-Leaf of Myself

After Basil Bunting

There's the Cantosian canvas
Painting itself. What is there to say about it?
It doesn't make sense. It doesn't need to. It needs
Every scree chipped and put down—seen—
To uncover the splinters of its wooden frame

That smooth nowt, place nought,
Crank out "Cantosian" and "nought"
To avoid… itself, the splinters
Going back on themselves to paint themselves

Foolishly a further way round.

One

Millions of safety pin pricks of ink make up my name
On paper: I sting

Them out the skin like gates
Opening as I shake from the cool, then light

Breeze that fills their place, soothed
Wounds makyō (illusion) leaves, deft

Touches bereft of grief—negated centres:

I'm not so clever
With whatever remains

Of me, spread across centuries
Or a single speck of non-history

In these rags of symbols and airs, the body
Perhaps there, though fenceless in this field.

Metaphysique

My grievances
Concocted into copiously credible convolution
Makes sick, though gives spit
To me for seconds
Of centring as I type, read,

Before reentering the grievance itself. Galvanised
I think I could be, momentarily,
By the inclusion of that, I sit
Static for this whole stanza
Nearly, wondering

Little of the feeling between my parts, all looking
At myself straining for peace
In weakly doing the same thing: see! metaphysique! My grievances
Conducted into copiously credible convolution.

The Sycamore Tree

In these bars there are demons
Propping it up, the wood
Never completed—enough; paint

Atop of cream
For stain we all see—accept—the groove
Of our movements unjudged

By the never-just-good: our conflicting speech
One day to the next trading point-
Less prize of who is godly

Ahead as we nudge hands back
Further beyond wrist, outstretched
With comedic frenzy

For seconds in time gone built
In the garden of the hazy forest of the sycamore tree.

Peak

You shiver so much you drop your hat
Then another: inside you find Godot
First before criminal intent and the best defence
Lawyer it's essential you come together for: you give in

To the cap temporarily fitting: your father,
His father wore them all too; and the trilby,
Cowboy and bucket with monocle? You hang
Your head and they all fall; they leave

A hand fit for shielding the sun, at times,
When it's too bright initially reaching, a doorway
Found in a downpour, as you can wait, a smile

At the boy heading to the fields
In his fancy dress to impress, his real
Headgear tucked away while he performs in next to nothing.

A Sign of the Loop

"Hmm—it be looking to me like we got us a case
Of being unable to do absolutely any one thing to help another person get out of a jam
while *simultaneously*
Us *also* having a case of everyone being saveable too, whatta-ya-think, huh?" he
Said to me, poking the body with a stick. I'd been

Hitchhiking these byways nearly five years
By this trip and it'd been the eighth
Time someone exactly the same as him had picked me up, found
A body and said that: "Yeah why not," I replied
To him like I'd replied to the last four also, but the first
Three? To be honest with you, I'd tried
To put together a reasoned and thought-out answer each time,
Only then I'd end up vomiting, and I'm not proud
Of that, only I'm over it now. "In fact," I
Added, "I think you be real right, sir. God *damn*!"

New Poem

He starts to see the robins as relatives, the neighbours
As friends, then foes—then fake
And phoney and swings
Knows where before

Trickling back in, he comes,
Questioning the robin—what it brought
Of relatives. He places a few new beliefs
Down on the enveloping snow

Carefully, going no further than his bin
With accusation, vaulted
Vocabulary, drafts: could that have been? Perhaps.
The birds and Barretts beyond the fence

Have so many sides depending on the sun's
Rise, don't they. He doesn't bite. Kicks the ball back.

Light Scratch

Sun goes down, phone
Goes down and that lil coin taste

To the right with teen speak
Giggles in at a distance, the anaclitic

Object-choice gets a dreamy bashing,
I aint ere nor talkin bowt im

Nor me, or me or me, kid, fucking loser,
Couldn't write one thing to save your life

And can't now. Fishing trips.
Paper round support. Used to touch at football

In celebration. I think we are all going be sick,
I agree. Not too high

On my list are old notes
On her, we're afraid—and I still am; yet a coupla

Stomach untwists sound
The worst cast I've seen in ages, pal—fuck me;

Yeah well what the fuck d'you know.

Habits

The street seat
Won't go: I take it back in, sink
With the shape and stain——
Shame

What the rotavator churns
Out the old poems: I got that tool

Aged six from the man
Down the lane at number six:

Farmer; third slip
Each week local games—

Never caught. It's a pain:
He still makes me call you

Rotating: "Five past two
In the morning?!" you say. "I have got kids, mate!" Lowlife——

I suck

The familiar one I know
On the right arm, one of the first

I spat—
Fumbled

Out my fingers thinking of you
Trying to stop.

An Inevitability

After Plath and Hughes

She turns into the tantrum that wants to harm the wait
Until he gets home——
I wait

Some days then awaken her again
With the same
Sudden sharp hot stink——
To think

We nearly ended

Then back again we come

To the bodily, thoughtly
Spike of dirgy memory: gone! Returned she

Wants some, me ready
Always like a fox for urban scraps
In dense population. Elation—
Mortality

Rate up out comes

The kids again! Banged pans
On the hob,
Threatening. I wait. And wait.

Silent Hill (1)

She flies back to Daddy and blankness,
Strangulated narrative untwisted—the old twist
Back in not tasted but swallowed—those hollow
Travels with Baldwin, Beauvoir tongue near rid, necessities
Required in the city, not the village. O Daddy——

I forgot the tribe and was so many things
To so many of them not talking
Between myself. I was so elusive,
Perplexing OBVIOUS
One stain said. He's dead. He not us in the outback, Daddy. They spoke back
And knew and I just want to swallow again
Any old goo of you and the outback. I vomit
Efforts of elaborating myself. Take me back!
Reconstitute me!
The city
Is a maze of tests and capillaries: the things they talk! proclamations
Available even to the measliest
Clean merchants. They ruined me, Daddy. Cheap mould of what we are not. Teach me
The old tongue I've gotten myself involved in noise
Our own blood's not bent for: I did the sums.
Undumb me. That's yum.

Resident Evil (2)

Men. Boys! I had to let her go.
I couldn't even start with what I think it is I know.
She's gone
Wasn't there I ruined
In the shreds of the mansion we'd occupied. We'd stolen
An abode for eating our meat. I cannibalised
Myself for jars of blood. To feed the growth! No good
Boys no good. Broken
Riddled foetal thing me now. Corner giggler.
Think odd harm games for breakout.

Sweet Home (3)

Years later, they catch-up over coffee, discussing
The silliness they needed to create.

Final(!) Bluster

Clinging to your favourite
Broken toy to design a future
For yourself to try and redeem the toy: sounds
Like this a bit, doesn't it? Ridiculous. Listen.

The voice comes to you
First as a parent or that close friend
You lied about respecting for years—nothing they can do—those
Cried sounds now spooking in the night taking years to undo

And sense until the true voice speaks through as what you do not want to sound like
Still because of the very childish diversions and close
Impossibilities and parents themselves too
That *you* must save, before it whispers

From a centre that is not measured or yourself
Jarring or justified and you will not need to "here's my spout" for your own sake soon.

The Wound

It must breathe but not be fed. It may sing
Knowingly though not of the primacy
It once held in the forest, now planted
With matters we pick at will.

How it chews must be heard and admitted,
Though rinsed. What it sees, holds up,
Must be winced through and unperformed
To reduce its parts. Its beliefs

Will be tight in the mind—chest: allow them
Checked; they dismantle themselves

Through grimaced cringe,
Strain—the pain

Resulting beyond calculability;
Until it's no choice but to eat itself.

Ameisenkrieg

I retry the hip
Flicking through the history channels: the facilitators

Come and go

Telling me it's postmodern babble.

I bathe the legs in Rilke instead, a different
Teat: up

Out the ring comes more self-
Reflexivity: we let pass it

Temporarily on this flat
Blankness across a landscape

Only I can see, want to watch, must
Play to you

The scattered notes: this tiny violin
—A billion strands—bars

Filmed before the cavalry retreated—the white flag
Episode: tiring

Is the war stretch before you chuck
The remote, stuck

In the throat: static.

The Poem Before This

Highfalutin
Self-wanking.

Songing Itself

These pinholes
Become mirrors; but what would I know about that?
Well you said it! I did?

The painter...

Was going to lie. The fox

Ate an orange as I left the dance, the integration

This is journaling. I want you to have all of me—what appears
In acceptable snippets to myself

Elongated—while my relationships crumble
For the progression dribbled down
To the good. I am so uncertain

In ways differently to them: how each time you change.
How I pull out pins and leave a chord
Off and songing itself
Of fox, stroke, an unlock I let go and close

In these mirrors, shards
Shattered on these streets——
In these ways I want to do more

Than can be made with you.

More So-called Impossibilities

Bubbling in my skin like a box of bees: why bleed
When one's already baked———terrible
Terrible terrible terrible terrible.
Plates from the gates:
OK delicious. God's gone numb today——

The public stampede
Before my imminent downfall struggling
To demonstrate the nothing I am in, present in the rotten
(Jim Carrey's happy), sodden in cracked tissues
And foetus imagery:

Doesn't matter to me. Bones crank
Out swings from Rilke: wanker. I get her
So much I can't touch it, can't mention it,
Skirt around it like a moth to a hip,
Contrive the whole thing until he passes.

Honey

O body—I pour
Honey into you

And out come bumblebees, that are

For sale: don't

Do it. Just let them sting.

Then silent butterflies leave.

More Wounding More Sponges

Perhaps the pins were bees! I knew the pins were bees—
Repeat stings and release of things,
Things I cannot say——idiotic noise.
I channel dead things to feel better than them, watch clips

Long gone.
Pulled out all too quickly for you,
That's all: I know what to do. You can see the result:
Poetic assault! Barbaric barding!

A new yard now though sowing? The spider's

Web used next to catch and integrate the bees—
Pins? Not sure how that'd work; though

The pins gone did! Lying in the field unfastened!
That part's not real. In fact, none of it is. Like millions,

Millions of plaster poems I keep ripping off, no scarring,
More wounding more sponges.

Hanging at Top of Log Flume

Watch yourself wander to synonyms
Of "mother's womb", "silent

Living room"——
Waiting

Before entering,
Conditioning to the gloom

Flooding to make the poem

Just before you lose it.

Papa Was a Rollin' Stone

Different names for needles—same pins———
Pricks pricks pricks pricks pricks.
Too many to pick. The device
Done it good with releasing measles
Bone deep: thick skinned

Was we in sleep. Sneak
Do insects patiently waiting for safer nets
Into syntax to finally creep
Out, freaked out I am at the side at the sight
Shouted in the speech they scribe

Sleeping so much better though, me, I can honestly speak
Beneath all the decoration, the hives,
Haystacks made up of straw
Play, a few more stored bruises caught.

Rebrand

Something moves not at all with all these abstractions: I want it to sound
"'Extract, extract'"—sharper noises;
Substantive fact not woolly verse.
It's OK though as I walk on the other side of the street
As photosynthesis

Spits out cheats: "Understand us
Yet? How long we've rehearsed." They write poems

To me too, giving me clues:
What Woody's blind eyes saw
When the adults reclaimed the room. "Poor

You again" the others dictate. And now there's the spiders,
Hairy—loads a legs
Inside us————their ability to hold more pens, rebrand
Themselves in novel models, cooked
Bare-handed… I hate

Them all too but they're required, all these
Tentacles—wires. Webs! Big ol' holes
Between threads for echoing: all the better
To drown what "is" with. "You know this?"
I know this————

Though it is always me
Reaching for the sky
Supplying the carbon dioxide.

Putting a Pin in It

Back from some kind
Of octopus's garden—I'm guessing
The valves
Unsticking from the ground—creates space

For all sorts to spin out: plates;
Finely managed hate
Through disjunctive sound———
But O well——beats

Having it go around
In the mind causing bother, potentially
Hovering out uncharted: started
With a little stab

From the nib of a bic, we did—playing
With it. I'm glad
It came out like this instead though, sowing
A path away from the madness, barely.

Ephemera

The face remains the same, good practice,
Like a sky migrating geese. They fly

In a "V" like they know what they're doing anyway, numerous
Reasons for it, feeling the drag one——

You'd never know. Blink and they're…
Still there, never gone, not really, a force

To be curtailed, like a cat on a keyboard————
Millions of them. And then it turns to you,

You trying to work? Expressionless. Though those long and winding
Meows or nasally honks it heaved

Out depending on the cloud? Seconds ago;
Why hold it against me? Whereas the dog

Playing poker when you leave the desk, the poetry
Dead? Something you'll get behind.

On More Rocks and Hard Places

I expect you to be regulated enough already
To respect the blue-green fictions I can offer you for your salvation; and it is toned
In a way that gets by them
But not by you from the off, currently: great work, me!—twinges
Of disdain I have in this not-possibly-submitted land, smiling—
As I have some choices!—knowing the blue-green
(Why, exactly?) *fence* is a bigoted attempt

In itself; and with that, if not
By now already then by *now*
Now I am no longer getting by them: come

My goldfish in clear water, straight-
Forwardly (though not by me), and float with me
Unsyntactically for their is less and less doing in this
Tiny pool of big sharks feigning fraternity (sorry, lads: limited alliterative choices available,
there).

Poem

Not Auden
Was telling me about the need to edit my poetry

For the Rialto. In other news, I had so
Little respect for their advice inside my own unique human experience,

That

Catchup, Usual Seats

"Where did she get this idea from? Perhaps from a bad translation."
—Anne Carson, 'On Walking Backwards'

"You never liked being laughed at," she'll say
Across from you, and you'll sit

Across from her and remember
All the things you dared not laugh at her about

Back then——how easy it would have been to do;
Nor

Will you laugh at where she's been since, nor where she's heading to.

Psychodrama and Self-Diagnosis

Finally falling steadily before they throw the soil…
But are these gravestones
Not only flying up past me instead? By the way they carry on
They'll be covering the landscape in dead notes
Disguised as directions to zones
Empty but for more signage. There, they apply more points,
Fingers extended outwards at further soil,
Gravestones, notes, funerals…

I'm struggling
To stay in this box, you'll notice,
Around these dead ends. O they've killed me
Plenty but I can't help myself: dead ends!
One man on the way to one of those zones—cast out
He was; he wouldn't hold an arrow: he laughed at me
In the ground halfway down peaking
Through one eye to see if they'd noticed

Where they were going. He wasn't popular.
I was popular with my shambolic worm dances, he called them, sent up
When I lay down before I again
Came back. "But if they help?" I said to him, weakly
Looking at the clouds one day, a deceiving backdrop
Of blue circles. "How'd you stay outsid-" I started adding,
Only it instantly then became apparent
Why some are supported down with so much soil.

Submission

"In the town they're searching for us everywhere
But we never will be found"
—Wings, 'Band On The Run'

The walls are now all content, leaving
Not even glass

Nor sky. Instead

I'm back banging rocks in this cave for you, as you
Were tired all evening: fine—you're left

Awake in the dark, wondering
What's

Echoing: the sound of us, sort of.

But that's just it: your bones, not necessarily
Fit

For a magazine made on a mountain (acknowledge
It's there, scalable;

Then weather) open

Ceilings and clouds
No more here

Than the mouths that bore them.

The Travelling, Maladaptive Memory Circus

We reduced the memory to ones and zeros
And tapped it out backwards onto her nose

For a joke, drunk: it left her

Lifted unnoticed, us on
To a new city hated again, only rhyming

In time for her later.

Not Yet

You rest in slippery uncertainty: the wound
Grooms itself——pains——
Groans——

——Soothes
Years later. That's the trick. Don't leave it!—
The world. Or stay curled in your ball

Wound
Around the wound————what?!
Don't get up!

You said to get up!
No. Not yet. Stay
In here and let me fill

You up, she said. Are you sure?
Yes? You shouldn't be. Fine.

Shipwrecked

Straight ahead, you fix——
You're also trying to feel out who is the same sea

As you; not
That you'd do anything with them

Anymore: share
The same boat? Disgusting!

Though you do hope they see your wave.

Reasonable Primer

You know what? you think,
Say to yourself—I'm going to stay in
And sit with it and bring all the guests
From the parties where they bought me the blank
Canvas, and I'm going to paint it, them beneath it
Holding it up the future party
Created in strokes ready for display
When you're done
Years in advance so I know what it looks like, who is there, them
Not invited. I'll probably only tell them they aren't invited
Once it's completed, so they continue
Holding it up in the meantime for you. O it's a mean time
Staying in and sitting
With all this, this painter
I've become it's only an hour, so far. I sit elsewhere.
You watch him
Brush wide. The neocortex knows what you do! you say,
Do I tap it? letting it play with the colours. If only I disappear. If only I didn't fidget. As you
bed them
Into some areas the buyers press back. You end up inside them.
And this is sitting in it. This
Distorts me. Some of the splashes seep over the side. The help
Scream and your sinew weaved yarn is pained. I don't even hold out a hand.
You lay the tools down—
Breathe. Sit. See. You are manufacturing the perfect painting
For yourself besides I am never
Going to be able to paint. The workman's—
Yes. OK I get it. The painter, you say
And so think between the paint—becomes the brushes.
At the ends of the movements are both seats
And movements, some steps, some forward.
It is extremely hard for me to sit in
In a way that you can say to me what you are doing; and I spoil
The guests with little stick people still:
You want a new canvas. You're sick of mixed media.
Who glossed the sharpenings on? Who would do that
Like this?
Get to your feet there are easels. You don't——
This could all
Be on there and you are feeling your way through it—
It's fine, you say. You move close
To each guest to fathom their hue
To capture and rid them unsticked.
This is going to be masterpiece, but not now,
You think. Don't click. They stick.

You aren't with it. I'm ashamed of you—that's it,
Seeping. How does it feel to blindly place that one stroke now then, you ask
Yourself how it lands it lands well? It could. Follow up? Rest now. Bed. Well fed.
Reasonable primer.

Achoo! Bless Me

The yin and yangs are so close now
Like advice
About my own nose: not to be sniffed at.
It comes to that
Sliced

Through but not spoken, like the boys
With their balls all summer, no seminar necessary.
I bet she
Wants to talk poetics—tools and
Divine dispensation. "Ziggy

Played the fiddle," I say
Waving from the platform
Delayed: she sobs; we're tied
Inside the doors both
Aboard. "I thought you were leaving!" I

Couldn't, you mouth: he turns to the camera,
Tapping it. Keepy
Uppeys on a higher step up
Each week. "Did you sleep?"
She hadn't slept.

Though I did eventually pull myself away
To return to the games: step overs;
Lops. "A sod, but sweet, we'd say
Back in the day," her mother said. "My mother'd be
Up all night with her rosary then: enjoy him

While you can, love—he'll go:
You can tell by the flares." What
Is true, said
As he's halfway under the fence.
"We'll never decide such matters."

Remember Me?

I'm dismantling the space station with a toothpick; and I don't like
The little sounds I make doing it. Underneath-

'Ll be a father not on a cloud
Calling the workshop a disgrace

With a boy inside him crying that's not my problem:
He hands me some tweezers. They're now

My problem and I'm turned
To face the plaster city I wanted to use

Today because of the boy in the father
In the space station *I am being told* to dismantle with worsening sounds

With a toothpick. I'm hunched over in the workshop
With a bad back and that vile woman

From years ago won't text me back, I've decided
More issues to make the to-do list harder

And sexier, begrudgingly starting with the casts supporting the shoulders
In Alexandria, as is my wont.

Conceit

She appeared to want seem accessible;
She had stock incredulity
Underneath that could be seen to
By all but her and understood. I wrote a poem

About this during the workshop,
And she said she loved it, the metaphor
About the workshop we were at,
But she surely couldn't have.

"I Think I've Got Early-Onset Dementia"

"And all you've done gives them amnesia (They don't remember)"
—Kendrick Lamar, 'Crown'

I swallowed 22 black shoes
In 4 days to soothe

Your Electra ways; and I do do, Achoo
Achoo through, are you,

With what was bugging you,
Him coming home with me, freed

Of poetry too, you, myths
Unwritten debunked, you

Slumped to recoup, out of
Funks, forever. Better?

You felt fine before—right. Write?
No need, you say! Take your words away!

For it's… better!—this way, you the poet
Green

Around the *girls*—are *you*
OK?—with little

To say
By the sounds of it? Weird poet! Thinks

He took away
My poem's schizophrenia! Achoo!

The Real Slim Shady

There is only placing my foot; but already

Yes I know these tendencies—we all do

So far here. I'm giving you the end of my fingertips

Too in ways that work for so far here. What a hidden blessing

To pull your leg this way; and I was doing so well

I'm not explaining that and only placing

My foot: the only feeling I needed

I left out all the other material,

Content available with that now

That used to be called other things, at least to me. I don't need to explain what they are;

I am trying to slow you down

Or undo the wrong kind of progress

While all those feral creatures catch up

That I left: That's what I mean then: I can place

My foot and wind you up if you choose

That and they'll be confused

Too—the feral creatures; but we will laugh

About it together only not

Over a desk, but on a mat, the memory not of that.

The Faced-Fox

What do we know of the fox's face then, mangy

Its body behind it
Dragged unbothered on days of ownership

With a rested smile, years of pain
Accepted—honoured———only then it

Turns sharp, with tight jaw, heavily-weighted
Grin of cunning manipulation: we

Feel it: peeps
Of an unkempt garden. If it lies in the sun

Instead—quiet, peaceful—hearing our fidget
Glaring from the frame, it glancing up, blinking,
Lying back down again
Without thought—us

Hurt,
Enraged, tight chested: the fox disrespecting:
It is then

That we should tiptop to its lightness, if wise, being brave
To begin again in shade

Mirroring, the grass
Growing up around us, different blades.
We see the fox's eyes unfazed.

It allows and meets our steadied gaze, respectfully.

The Film Of

Feigning in fog
Shouting, "Sun! Sun!" too tired

To meet you
Expecting ever newer weather. Whether

Or not you'll move together
In rain again

Is not of your choosing: you've donned
Your brand new waterproof

(It's functional: less fashion-infooled
Are you) so you can only wait

For them to see the gales, rays,
Waves as something to be led

Straight through, not against
In faux and transparent layers

We all feel the film of regardless.
So by all means,

Hold out your hand.
Even wave in front of their hood.

But they're going to need to choose the dance themselves.

Self-Diagnosis and Psychodrama

Unfortunately you do feel the past in their future, and you cannot ignore that,
And you cannot swallow it anymore either. You'll want it

To smother your face again (there's no place like home) but there's no place
Like home—there never was;

And that only ever made the shortcut sing, cul-de-sac
Echoing like the smell of Sunday dinner up the stairs: it will this time, surely, soak

Every side-eye up down there? You wipe your brow
How you used to wipe your mouth after being a devilishly-

Divine good boy, and even the lightest touch—for you aren't sweating:
You're cold—brings out the wild and precious life

Antonyms for the hymnless you lay beneath, and you think… well,
Not, "What a waste," because look at all this.

Reading Poetry

Hmm. Not sure what that one means. But it sends
The right shivers and makes me want to read
More again, and then sound like this—to be

On trend; though not to have to mention that as much. The title
Could do with being a bit more circumstantial
Actually. How much does that "actually"

Offer; how long must we wait here? O now we're talking; though
Not: allude to patchy childhood memory there—I usually do.
Feel a sense of sadness and regret

And irresponsibility at what I'm clearly choosing for myself again at this point: done. All
This from not really understanding a thing; but the shivers
Are now comparable to these leaves

Outside. With a tree behind? Beginning them? I'm sure of it.
Not that I am sure their greening was deliberate: turning?

"I Hope None of the Others Have Been Copied as It Will Create Chaos Later On"

Before they go into work tomorrow
To explode over their workflows being edited without their consultation

They will call you weird and dramatic this evening, creating
An excellent poem.

Porphyria's Lover, Mariana, Momentarily Thinking

If he killed me I would be dead, and then the wishing would be finalised: the shadows wouldn't come, I wouldn't long, I wouldn't… take myself to him again, that wind, that creaker. I would not be in this in between place, knowing he cannot fulfil me—knowing he doesn't want me—and life would not be threatening or dreary anymore. I would not be so beautiful and naive. At least they wouldn't call me naive; he would not be coaxed so he would not even be able to kill me? These things I wouldn't think about, at least; I'm stupid, I'm sure. Our early days did this. I would not be stuck as his window—which I do not want to be!—nor he at mine when I am not there; and nor would I create his gods. I know that happens, by the way. Why do I tell you? And these are the things I don't want to know, but I do know I know them, despite what they say, so I'd rather be dead—that he killed me—then be stuck as his, or not only as his, or crudely as yours. Only yours! My murder by my own twine though—or his strings!—immorality a much longer night without my talk.

When You Feel Unheard

Switch seats, providers,

Planets.

Your New Poem

I wait in the grass
For someone to offer me something
And it comes off the shelf
So I offer it in a similar vein

To the barista
Who didn't know she'd be here.
"I thought
Bowie would save me." I had

A lot to redeem, tighten. "What
Made you come here from the grass?"
How far do we go
To escape the bricks and mortar: I practiced

In the mirror, speaking, staying
Behind in the same way for her, pathetic, scared.

Might as Well Be

The plaster's drying! The air
Stings of particulars
From fifteen years ago: what's the harm

With going back? he says
From a shoulder you sit
Still, stick to the plans,

Go to the cinema, remember
The smile *and* the teeth, the semen
Off ‘um like a novelty toy, -pedias

Float past on green lettering: this
Coffee!—might as well be
Any number of things you could plug

The poem with now, like a scabbing
Wound you like picking.

Slinky Getting Off the Stairs (Temporarily)

Some evenings, mornings you will enter or leave
Multiple bedrooms, beds, eyes
Dozed and uncomprehending
Of the space how did you get here, are you
Here, does the mind
Do that did they do that, am I creation,
Where are the living. A minor
Note slip unheard but by experts, purposeful,
The windows and walls glance, stop nodding,
Winking, turn back, face the stage, go
Forward brush your teeth for you.

Something

About your therapist and being
Naked and sex then follows
To ruin it all. To balance
The form in the way it’s expected and retake

The stairs.

You

You know there is something you could,
Should be above—relieved of,
Released from, over,
Dropping or leaving

Or going
Like you’ve felt it before. It doesn’t
Make sense, coming here,
Finding this like this: you prefer

Films—chatting shit. What the fuck’s
He on about you’re still
What is it? You start again—

Fall back. Not

As deep? Do you sense that yet?
Do you ever watch the credits?

Samuel Who Works in the Better Food Café

Had an idea again about turning
These questions—this creative struggle; "What *should*
We do?"—into its own poem; and I've just read one
About Proteus;

So I Googled us: it changed
What happened. I say "again", though it wasn't
Samuel qua Samuel this time, but him
Only nudging like the last prop did (sorry, Samuel) to free

The mythology that needed to be saved. Something
About bees too, apparently. Astounding.
Do we really want to share all these carcasses

Turned inside out without explanation? An answer
To the cut before it's closed up? Knowing a stitch
Has some nerve before it heals out of the blue.

Could've Been Somebody (Peeking Through the Keyhole)

With some of him
Inside you
You lay there poetically numb

And said
I'll probably
Regret it for the rest of my life.

I witnessed
In that moment tongues
Evidenced

Luke 23:34.
I rose
From the floor

Years later
Leaving you
In your final room unborn.

As the "Voice" Goes

Samuel talked of self-inquiry (an academic
Way of saying "editing", I feel) and I slumped
Inside myself momentarily,
Because the very art of what was going on

Between us organically was doing that anyway, only
He
Then had to name it something. Where am I going with this? Ashley,
Ashley where are you going with this? What
Ideas movement safety net
Are you attempting to catch, going to offer
Elsewhere as if one
Is this; why did you do that;
Who're you kidding—no one? Reader—
"Seeker"? Disappearer? We cannot explain it from here, this losing…
Well it isn't exactly feeling. Experiential either no—
The nothingness but rightness. Ashley isn't talking. Samuel
Was a "seer" and some dots joined
Uneventfully from the old documentation
At our old fingertips before they remain, only
Not so importantly for the spirit that pervades. He hopes he shares this—
Seen mad. It is thinly
The voice of something else once the slumper (giggling)
Sees itself and ignores? allows?
Not to worry; is besides the path being laid now. Nothing has been found. It's own
Question was answered in the movement: there is only
Removal to allow further and further closeness
Until the words disappear; but you and me both
(And you) know how that sounds: experience
As widely and yet insignificantly
As possible the fear
Before swimming a little further again. Floating? Floating
And watching with trust
In the speck and the negation of all else; but I'm unhappy
With that as the "voice" goes.

<u>New Paradigm</u>

She was sat with her legs resting up
On her wheelie suitcase, her feet
Sensually flipping back and forth as she stared
Straight ahead into matters I couldn't go to. The Chinese
Children ran to their father. Sorry I'd just landed.
They met him at the gate
And I had thoughts about who would meet me
In other times, where I was. She smiled.
I smiled and we glimpsed each other
In smiles and acknowledged the transitory beauty
Of the scene: it's one I can't offer you now. I could tell
From the steadiness of the movement
That she had class
And control. "What's a guy
Like me got to do to take a woman like you
For a drink?" I said as we both
Overheard the debate, the sun was sinking. She tucked
Her hair behind her ear. The feet had stopped.
The rattle of trolleys and a chorus of flight. "Don't ask me like that
For one thing," she said.

“Don’t ask me like that at all.”

The Very First Confession

“I just thought… you know. I didn’t want to look at my daughter like that anymore! So I made this.”
“Right. Should I be writing this down?”
“What? Can’t you see I’m upset!”
“Sorry! But shouldn’t we record this somehow?”
“Not directly.”
“Well is the gown necessary?”
“I think it is? I don’t know! I’m guessing to be honest. The boxes are cool though, right?”
“I suppose.”
“What else are you wearing?”

Without Stares

We’ve gone back in, deconstructed,
Formalised (we’ll come back

And change those too) childhood

Without stares: witness! The ballerinas!

Freely! No floor!

(Love) Feels Nice

It was not there in the deafening
Silence between opening

Presents; better

Not bang on about that though, Ash,
Because you’d rather

People read your poetry (so-called), no?
And receive

The real, immaterial gift of substance
That can build steps to what—heaven?
That’s a hell

Of a replacement, created
From a few missed hugs: sucks

To be a saint. Even more so if he’s stuck
Full of hate: can you not

Just give that up too? Fine. Where to now?
To write?

I sit

Here in stillness. Open. Confused.
Listening

For a line——nothing! Silence!

Feels adequate. Nice.

Surreal Criticism

Van Gogh comes to me in a dream; though for the title's

Sake we better say I'm awake? and says, "Some days

The paintings were terrible. But how's work?": you interpret it.

Absurd Criticism

Your poem shouldn't be here; though I shall

Acknowledge it and wrestle
With it and acknowledge

It and wrestle with it before criticising
It at work before thinking

About It for my entire lunch break.

You On

"On a screen I can see it now
A thousand pieces
I can see them falling down"
—Sad Lovers & Giants, 'Colourless Dream'

We rise up
Or slip beneath
The noise of vāsanā repeats; as someone

Doesn't know which way it goes
In these naked blankets.
Under

Trees, their drops still make us
Believe in you. Each time colours
Fade in sun tricks

Here, we barely wink: think it's time
We allowed the brightest to fade——
It is having

You on, but no more so
Than channels in jelly, resting,

Shaking itself

Anew in 78% nitrogen.

Real Poem

The sacred art
Is filling all the sinkholes
Unmystically
I'm afraid
Walking along without thought
The buses
Miss a stop we walk or get the next one
Get where
We are going nothing happens
Ever again
It's painful
Blissful unnoticed

That Thing Down There

Masses of emails and migraines
And panic and swiping and flick-
Ing and fibbing and sensational-
Ising your sentences and sex life

When you're going have to feel it
One day

Or not! No big deal!
As it'll be waiting

For you when you come back anyway.

Scraps Put Together

"Throw them away"
—Section 25, 'Hit'

Do not worry: you will feel
Your clothes someday fitting (it'll be trivial). Your speech
Will meet itself minus lumping
Hiccupping the academics
Will seem psychotic: they always were ("I knew it";
I know!) You will sense
The truth of yourself—experience—
Spoken silently as love
Drifts aware from self-concern, awareness
To everything: they will no longer all
Be dead (you'll be over
Yourself) No one
Will be watching you as you'll be looking
Straight ahead

Knowing which way that is—which way up is—
Without looking. Long stretches of painless existence
Will occur (apparently) between some narrative
You'll no longer recognise or own
Going on up there (apparently) you'll no longer buy
Into it you'll not
Be able to count, I'm afraid: you'll not care for money anyway. Your life
Will sort itself out
While you do the work
Outside yourself with less and less seams.
You will cry
Often anywhere and it'll feel
Better than the taste of every last cigarette you've ever tried (fuck it) the road
To death (yep) the road until the end
That may not loop back through
If you do well (there is a well) will appear
(Don't worry) along with what the path back was
—The poor efforts,
Editing and it will not matter: you'll be home;
Cheese won't matter. Rhythm
Done everything and nothing
Important with you gliding along, all beautiful,
All sense with no attempt to say so. You will say
Your name to yourself
Alone in your room and there will be silence—
No contradiction; no doubt;
No importance the stretch
Out into your own paving will continue
Unremarkably as all the past
Tentacles joy-
Sticks knots rope have gone. You'll never read this seriously again.

Does It Blindly

A cough
Clears another character, stops
Another storyboard—leaves another poem

Going into this stanza
Without you
Moving, acting—just eyes

Glancing as the mind
Does it blindly: deletes
Old scenes—undoes

What seems to be nothing: what's he saying; can't
Hold rhyme, rhythm.
I'm watching all mine

Timeless. Off
They go. The slate. Shops. Others.

Cartolandia

We'd just cycled through it, rain, but now it trapped us.
You
I am the sun
And move on, the fragments

Of a brain and now I've ruined it: you have the theme—
The method.
I cannot get back to when I was binding myself

Together and the modernists
Flirted more (though unnew
Paradigmists)

Saved me, and ruined your reading
Habits. I sit in the fluidity
More myself and experience and hand you this? How

How dare I like this, of course,
Thinking how you'll hate to go quiet.

What the Home Video Has Reduced Itself To

He imagines meeting up with you.

Very Old Psychotic Thing

A caterpillar was playing his t-shirt in the wind on a boat with a chestnut roasting on an open pit of his former wife's autonomy turned around twice on the spot of his midlife crisis and it said, I am getting myself so high I might be unobtainable. My best has gone – pull me down. So we pulled him down, and it was just a silly man grinning. Close one, that; back being seen – trapped.

And So Three… Tw- O They Were Already Filming!

Deforesting the body's creeks
That used to be favourites, voting habits,
Perversions called "love" while we keep
One eye on the boom operator

That turned up ("I've been here the whole ti-") thin
Diplomats are we for our time
With limbs building more as we cower
From the plinth. Expensive,

Cumulative wriggles on our tongues
To work through: as valid as a prayer,
Suckle—a different tap as we go ahead, complain,

About what could have and could not have been here
In this moment, we decree
And cut. Fantastic. Now, a script?

All You Need to Know

Lighter and lighter
Pain, does not
A Grecian Urn make: I hope

You realise
That had to be comma
And not a line break——how this

Scoops up any bother
Further—
Adding?

OK this both settles it and unsatisfies you.

*

O Games! O Bluster!

There is a boy
Wanting to cry beneath

Who knows why you do what you do.

Poem as Intellectual Exercise Using Symbols Taken From—Excuse Me!: Abstracted From Conditions My Experience Offered and Understood Back Then, "Then" as I Understood… Just Now, the "Now" in "Just Now" Phenomenologically Felt as Look Who's Talking, Pablo (Outside the Piazza; "?!?!?" Signage Distinct From: O Boy)

After The Poetry Review

See above

Power Tends to Corrupt

After reading an interview in The Bath Magazine after reading another top, top drawer poetry magazine

"What strange folly"
—Kenko, 'A Cup of Sake Beneath the Cherry Trees'

You will find me next to the £90 belt in the second house. No in that magazine
Silly

Precious. That means "dur".
There is another magazine (how I sound!) on aesthetics

And football next to the one I will be glancing
To the left in, therapeutic pose, mug

Two-handed, close, tight. I'm overdoing it.
I think that's you,

Sadly. I'm not sad you're sadly: gosh.
This

Yep: all mine. It may feel we haven't started but you haven't
Caught up and we aren't slowing down, dropping

But your hue! Blame
The sport aesthetician.

Art really, really helped me challenge
My condition. But honestly? It was the money that changed my life.

Review in Spoons

"The abundance of fragments of the past (of which a tiny present nourishes itself)"
—Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet*, Letter Five, 29 October 1903, Rome*

The past in your periphery
Vision like a ballerina's
Hand who doesn't even try
To hold you. Yet you sway,

Stay here waylaid (temporarily) around
The corner you've made of straight lines
From old snow (you promise) melted, gas
Then not poisonous—tempered: twenty-three

Paces to the exit (you reckon) the entrance
Of a new life, again,
Again, again every morning meal time,
Moment. What'll you pick? Where

Will you look? As it leaves
Itself: you are writing the poem.

Inverted Or

Sorry this one will do it less
Softly pointing out the lack of feeling
You have you were having them on the whole time
Weren't you it's OK semi
OK they'll never love again,
It'll take you sometime.

Take the cheese
To the sofa, curl yourself up and put down
The cheese: you need to feel this. You need to feel
This irritation then anger
Then rage then pain then the inverted or-
Gasm of sorts, the content of the dis-
Sociated cloud that came as you came, him
Only trying to do this quietly back then without such fuss.

Ga Ga Non-Stick

Finally the genres merge
Self-reflexive, screaming
Silently in non-stick pans
Above all the incest, wonderwall,

Nothing explained unmetaphoric but an end
Found, not sought, shocked
Shrugged accepted: we'll never
Hear the end of it——

They never heard the start.
We found love in a hopeless place: radio,
What's new? killing the reruns
On its way out, collaborations

Nearly done, job… done!
The words fail me. Fortunately!

Having Already Seen the Puppet Show

You sit on your hands and don't sleep, act dumb,
Not a wink or peep, just staring

Straight ahead, waiting
For the violins to catch up: s'not quite

In sync are those shadow animals too? Knew
'Twas a show: could tell by my mood.

Was it really for the kids? You're thinking all this.
Don't worry—best thing for it: forget

Hopes of glory you've seen
The puppet show, that's all. And you told

Them so? When? How? Well you coulda
Plucked louder!: he's pulling their strings now.

Poem That Isn't Quite There Yet

You kept the rapists alive, because who was going to cook dinner?
Now there's only fighters

And deniers leaving everything

In its right place, unfortunately.
Not that we'd have it any other way, these

Choices of ours. Well it wasn't you

Was it! Putting the poem down already!

Exactly.

Hardly your fault. Fuck um.

Not Overthinking It

I want to pull you towards me, into me,
And fix something only felt: that's

My inclination, default,
The flat reality of it (base feelings:

I'm not responsible) which in my
Experience

Means you've done something you shouldn't have done

And I need to push you far

Far away.

Siri

I am enjoying getting it wrong, being
Profound;
And discovering who is here—
Why "discovering"
Works
Better. As does this.

Through me is a toddler
Writing credible scripture without the popularity: it's a relatively
New curse.
So things… flow charted
Will flummox off my word this especially—ruining

What discipline? You made
Me cook like this, really
Really away, finally.

Negative Transference (These Poor Pages!)

Lord can I temporarily create,
Write you? They think

They'll resolve their regret
Through me: they left

That boy for mythology—
Faux

Versions of themselves
As demons, as cool

As nothing.

Now look at them

Again—still!: us
Musing them knowing

I'm not
Putting out

Nowt
Myself, for them

But this. Thanks bye.

Unconnected

"Let me hear both sides, let me hear both sides, let me hear both"
—Radiohead, 'Idioteque'

You come here
With education—comprehension;

And no one left to manoeuvre—
Friends

Leaving you with all the characters;
And now you expect to be cored——OK:

Take
The part of you which ignores

All you have done—actively
Chosen; and leave it

To the side (you were doing that
Anyway? Fine) and say

Something like, "I deserve
To reach even higher

In material comfort," to yourself;
And then

Place this on the shelf
Thinking

"Wanker"
Or similar; and fan

Your outer most core
More. More.

One Day You Finally Knew

Can't do it from over there

No more: I'll do it from here instead—take stick;

Sound utterly ridiculous actually that's

No: still do it for yourself—please. Sorry.

Actually nor that.

I Love You

"I realise that I've been, in your eyes, some kind of fool"
—Colin Blunstone, 'Say You Don't Mind'

In a century's time
They will narrativise
And medicalise
A self from the output you provide

Which you won't recognise (you'll be dead) and they will also categorise this excess as a
"poetic device"
Perhaps.
Until then, you're on your own
Looking mad, only

If you're listening (who?) you'll
See you already said that.

The Triangle

"Without you, what are they for?"
—Andrew Lloyd Webber, "Til I I Hear You Sing', from Love Never Dies

He's putting words in my mouth. I am making you say whatever I like.
The line at the bus stop
Below the forbidden planet was blocked from your lens,
The pieces of jigsaw. Manufacturing
In these cities is making you rich, sickly;
Struggling to hold on

To the structures we needed back home
Where we spitefully left the clueless.
Only now they come here
On their busman's holidays, miserable,
Correct undoing all our hard work on their voices, pacing
Behind the stand, one chap, knowing
You and me both more than we would admit
To smiling at, our secret embrace, our… taboo kiss.

Recently Deleted

“How come you understand?
I can offer you nothing at all
This is more than I had planned”
—Dean Friedman, ‘Lydia’

I return to you, find you. Remember your keywords
And search. Recapture.

It means I repeated
Steps; some won’t notice—

Leave. Believe I’m their lover.
It’s how

And I’m hungry
We become so much

To so many and you know, of
Course, we had to continue

Beyond
Our arrangement. That this

Both works
And doesn’t.

Two

“His case inspires interest
But little sympathy”
—John Ashbery, ‘A Man of Words’

Whereas my neighbour still grips all the pins
From Sean’s party when all the doors parted, so many

That summer for him: he’s wrongly held what was framed
Of what Lucy played; and the summers

After with Jane, scores
Of gates unchained and unchained: the pain

Remains of her parting, seared
In by him—he will not let go—fastened

To skin fearing what’s beneath: sitting
In grief—of chiselling,

Chiselling down through the snow, the frozen
Selves of what’s chosen, neighbour——

I will not go near him. I do not mind being honest. I
“Hi!”, smile and try

From afar but he’s too
Far gone. Alone. Millions of neighbours. Everyone

Else in chains, chambers,
Grids: “They’re this this and this!” he says

Of all those outside him, he sees
Safely from the fence

He’s seen through.

Most Lives

I cannot articulate myself
Fuck you
The first line wouldn’t even make sense, you twat

Art and Truth

“"A ha," said Picasso, "I can paint false Picasso's as well as anybody."”
—F for Fake*, directed by Orson Welles, 1973*

My friend in her seventies said her and her friends
Helped created Hollywood, which was an early

Plot twist does the screen-
Writer want you to stay? Have her dragged

In a bush drugged raped, then cut
To her mate in a mini skirt, his eyes, Lynch

The thing they’ll buy it, there’s plenty of
Truth to go round all the while

Play the opposite of what’s expected:
They’ll keep up! They’ll have to. No just leave

Her under there
That shorter less is more, it leaves

An impression makes them work for it! Multiple
Seats on set, her lap, his knees——perfect.

How Not to Start a Poem

They press against you in the morning making whiny
Baby noises and say, “Can’t we just have

A couplet?”

AKA

I was right in front of you in my dingy, drowning,
No actually floating. You did not like it.
You unfollowed, blocked,
Closed the app sprayed
Your flowers. Did whatever I think you do, my phoney
Clairvoyance
From swimming rock armbands,
Bad rhythm. Uncalled for rhythm.
Why couldn't I wait for the event, the week-
End? My weekend made uncom-
Fortable by something so close? How am I supposed to say that?
Not happy.
I am… sorry
That happened but did you have to you're conflating issues? You know
I don't know what to say.

Forgot This Amazing Epigraph

"Jason: Sometimes people just can't get out of their own way.
Bre: Well, she needs to get out of my way, or I can't come back."
—Selling Sunset*, Season 8, Episode 1*

You are not Selling Sunset
But failing to budget
Well, for that weekend gram
You'll want to share with Tammy
To enable your fleeting guise Dithyramb.

Monday: you'll be back at the cooler.
You will barely not be a drooler.
"These people: they'd never understand Dithyramb.
Dithyramb is the real me—not a sham.
Dithyramb slams. Can't believe Tammy thought that name up!"

Selling Sunset for Monday evening.
Your mind is scheming
For how to fix Saturday night: seething
You were with Billy, who used to work in HR

As an apprentice, but he has now gotten far
With something weird, you've heard, doing what Dithyramb is not
As he drove past the club without even a nod. Probably
Wasn't him. Maybe? There are also fleeting thoughts

Of God on these cold lonely nights. Billy
Seemed to nearly come back to you all
Again but he didn't, it just appeared
To be a possibility as he circled back around.

My Cat Is Dead

"The male cicada makes a loud, shrill droning noise"
—from Google definition of cicada

I do not think about you as I would
Be moving parts very far removed from myself without an understanding
Of their meaning or significance: phantasmagoria;
Cicada. Sorry you are not making any
Sense I overheard in the cafe
I am giving up on you—I'm sorry;
I am wasting my life and have had it
Peaches! Sex!

Another Poem That Isn't About Me Struggling and Blaming the Government

"Yes, you can imitate everyone you know"
—The Beatles, 'Dig a Pony'

Your disappearance from me
Premised on myself is now an intellectual concept
Shouted out, me being the first
Like I was last time about the other thing
You didn't buy so why do you have
The audacity to think it is available to you? That it should be explained?
Just know
Or else there are other things I can express
That you also won't get because
Of the intellectual concept
Thing I am not aware of. No I will not be finessing
This hence my use of a variation of "finesse", not
Get to understand that either though you will—peasant.

Traffick

I am trying to tie further laces (that recreate them) without talking to you;
But you know what I'm like: the student
Was at the crossing with the man
On green and he stood there unable
To cross: he was lost in his screen. He pressed the button again.
He pressed the button again and that again brought
More guests to the solo lunch, old colleagues
Rushing past heads down as they want
To come back: the man, unlit,
Won't clarify as you need to press
And press and find out yourself: that better be another schizoid
Voice gassing in odd clothes. The laces! That'd be a settler but he's left
Before the lights face away still not stepping
Over as he tips tips tips tips tips it, irritating
Everyone else around the table; but perhaps they need
Breaking outta that childish habit, kids,
Of playing with their alphabetti
Spelling out imaginary friends on the edge of the bowl, which

Slide back into the sauce
Over their names eventually: proper
Pasta tomorrow please? Cuz the traffic ain't always this bad.

Please Tell Me Who I Am

"I've gotta say I wasted all your time
...
And ah, when you work it out, I'm worse than you"
—Coldplay, 'God Put a Smile Upon Your Face'

You have seen it: the shame
Coming out organically.
Though you are not buying into it, it coming
At a cost

Further down the line. So we shall

Return again to these shores, doubly adamant,
Unseen,
Parked for God to come (he's 33? The messenger;
Fine 3) with new histories to buy, climb

And escape from in silence: clunky
Catching closing gates; perverted
Pain converted. We shall find tonight, tomorrow.

I could not make it to the hollow tree: one.
How bad can I make this inconsequential thing here
Above me? How obvi... *vicious*
It said! All the things I've been saving
Up these past few days: clouds
Pulled by fog themselves (I've decided) deter-
Mining our jaunts. So many other, two,
Three, four...

Again, we don't care about you.

Undone themselves in the wind, you've seen,
Meeting for another
Timed race: the start and finish

Lines are a testament to this community
Of sinners

Further put down, ever available
To take whatever you need of you.

Viewing Gallery

“I’m out of my head”
—Olivia Newton-John, ‘Hopelessly Devoted To You’

Of course, there’s no meeting with
(Who is this person saying “Of course,” ?) only
The dropping of further as you stand still (but that
Same person would have said “moving further away”, “leaving
More behind” instead or something) I think;
Though that may have been this person?
Until no meeting is required anyway, which would mean
(Something may have happened;) and out (or in) it may come

Unconsciously, much to the surprise, even
(Doubt? Cynicism) of
Well it isn’t yourself, is it, because that brings in
Far (too many factors and we know what that did
Before, (don’t we) yes)—yes we do. We could (go on) thinking

Of it as watching whatever there is, until
There isn’t (a watching?) anymore? But? (I dunno; no idea! shh).

“Pete”

“I’m beginning to know myself”
—Fernando Pessoa, The Book of Disquiet

Pete returned to his new work, his familiar office,
A new name badge and stripped
Naked in the foyer—said, “Is this
What you want from me? Of yourselves?
I have given
You everything and it circles always—mo…
Bear with me while I check the pronunciation…
Möbiusly curves
Into nothing, after all. And you wanted me back
Already to return, to keep
Returning? What do you want of me—come on;
Explain!” The committee stood still waiting for the para…
But the cleaner stopped them. “No; not again; *this*!” pointing
At the badge. “He’s right. Totally correct. What were you expecting?”

Feedback Loop

“I don't wanna do it like my daddy did
I don't wanna give it to my baby's kid”
—Red Hot Chili Peppers, ‘This Is The Place’

I preferred numbness so close to being
Part of the problem, to be frank, Susan—
I know how I sound and no one asks
For it, like this, again (those commas for you); so out

It pours in seemingly undidactic trash (at best) like it falls
In with the rest of them
Unquestioningly: get it? the video
On the other side? OK the video bit was made up; chaotic

Guff to take us out the night—spite? Me?
A rhyme? Danny chimes in
About not remembering again and Frankie
(What time d'you call this? The jury's been out!) frankly

Is not to be trusted; though is he
Saying something? (Channelling?((!)!)) No, thank you.

Alien Thoughts

After Robert Browning

These leaves are browning. I pick at a pollening
Stalk for its last sticky autumnal dew
Before snowbound spray hoarily
Plays further for you, some mornings, careless, cold, swallows

Migrating finding faux bent boughs gaudy, you
Gladly bowing to the wise thrush's
Flowery song of found sheaves though, I reckon: it squats on washing
Lines picking at more sticks where the sun
Will soon not shine in these bleakly written times.

How Your Life Works

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

Hyenas stalk the forest edge seeking…
"Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha." Phew!

Hyenas stalk the forest edge seeking…
"Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha." Phew!

Hyenas stalk the forest edge seeking…
"Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha." Phew!

Hyenas stalk the forest edge seeking…
"Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha." Phew!

Hyenas stalk the forest edge seeking…
"Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha." Phew!

Hyenas stalk the forest edge seeking…
"Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha." Phew!

Hyenas stalk the forest edge seeking…
“Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.” Phew!

Ahead

You trade it all in for six die
(He takes your voice) and roll
Them refusing to move
Until you get everything; repeats

Come up, but whadda you care?
Outside, your voice
Ten rolls behind: “Yeah
Yeah yeah,” creating more sixes&sev-

Hang on!

No Way Near the End of Language, but Further Along Than Now

Frozen in the pipes. Wos-ul-tha engineering for?
Still
Drips thru-a napping, loda-
Prolum—looks-a-lora-lie, bu-noh;

Still geh-rus—saves peaches.
Lil-fry-beaks peppering brazzes, stuffing
Upt-option. Ohma-fix—
Bubba. Squeeze-owt

Save brazzes. Twhy
We gets the bits over
Down the thinny-drip norror-worry:
Lookalookalooka-samma

Burah-nah. Pipes’ll
Gella-lil-*chip!*—leak; all doin-it.

Insecurity Theatre

“Why you think I'm out here actin' crazy?
Why you think I'm out here actin' crazy?
Why you think I'm out here actin' crazy?”
—Action Bronson, ‘Actin’ Crazy’

It’s amazing what you can get done while you’re *temporarily* afraid of intimacy,
Some of it’s good, some of it’s
Chaotic thought sequences. You do not
Need to befriend the baristas, only
Be cordial and professional and honour
The connection for what it is, value your boundaries,
See the future. And look—you’ve still made it.
Not that it’s
About good or bad; but I didn’t say that:

They just
Are it is October 2024;
It is *that*
Line that's the issue, you know——the one returning kisses.

"You are now fifty-"

You are now fifty-
Five and everything he said
Was right so how's life?

Bell Atom

Bell Atom turned away from the board.
"We are trying to suckle our bottles
Through quantum mechanical models."
He then pulled out a gun

And shot himself. First lecture of the semester.
Extraordinary work. Exactly as he'd wrote on the brief.
Keith

My roommate removed
All his socialist posters and Harry
The hoover ('cause he was a snorter) put down

The ket and cut through
The alt stage, working
Instead on his rage before marrying
Paige, a barista who taught the Bhagavad Gita.

Get You a Poet That Delivers on Sunday Mornings

I deliver to these argument houses, yeah:
How these spices should go in the cupboard.

Not that way, he says
From the floor above bellowing

I ignore him no respect, slip

Into something else—

She liked that. An extra ambient
Tray
Dispatched on the offbeat.

How Many Times Can You Look At Yourself

"Quartet. The different parts are always meddling with each other"
—John Ashbery, 'Valentine'

You passed from the dream, nightmare,

Game; it's been a productive morning: "The decor's
Insane: 2D?!" briefly: now you're over it———besides
How many times can you look at yourself

In the mirror the irritation *still* decorated (so what;
Who gives a fuck) by parts still *looking* at the trees, performative
Synonyms build in a world
Irresponsibly and as an antiques dealer's

Trundle wheel on weekends canvassing mud.
You wish
To tell him another way, but you're six
Again in a featureless gown kicking balls against a wall

Teasing out dust that raises the so-called roof:
How does it end?

Pebbledashing

"I remember you was conflicted"
—Kendrick Lamar, 'These Walls'

Saw a poet at work
Pebbledashing a house
It wasn't clear to me if it was him or me
At work he wouldn't tell me he
Was awful with the place
Throwing everything… I told him not to
Throw some of the obvious
Stones: some of them stic- stink
Think you're a weirdo, they do
Ash why are you doing this
To yourself, you can make
Impressive, no beautiful homes—responsible—
When you try love child walks past
Something shimmers on a lake

That window's a decorative facade
This line: temporarily gladding
No, we aren't settled on the fascias

The End but That's Better Than

"Of recorded history flashes past, struck dumb, unable to utter an intelligent"
—John Ashbery, 'Syringa'

Another comes along with a wheelbarrow canvassing for Orpheus
Still fine his second cousin Olly black sheep, volunteers
On a helpline walks home dead
Of night dragging dreams of dredged up delinquents, incessant deeds
Deemed old by the very wheelbarrow, you can't just leave it

There better take it with you, inverted

Sisyphus trying to be as steady as possible
With the damned thing ignorant to the falling soil, less tattie
Famine at least, the lutenist's composer
Burying himself in the notes notably dredgful; we can't

We can't go on like this, Riddy. You're too basic!
Look at what's piped along behind me: a vast lyrical sheet
Of secondarily coloured warp and weft yawn covering the land
Olly came from. O he's out there trying to singe the end but that's better than

To Other Questionable Hoarders

It accumulates
Sometimes you need a good dump
Other times you have no accumulation, only the memory
Of how to enact the dumping. You can't save up the knowledge
Of it might not be right: sometimes
At best you go there and back
Without even noticing, no one knew you went to the kitchen,
Broke off an argument.
Imagine selling a product
That works best the one time then only "nicely"
When things are doubtful and slightly dramatic, and all the free
Add-ons do is point that out
Barely each time but you can't not make them free?
And you can't tell anyone your job title
Either because it's so cringe, extremely
Off-putting except to other questionable hoarders who are
Sometimes grateful for the aftercare, but mostly wonder
Why they ever needed it, how they ever got it out of the packaging,
Bought it, said it changed their life. And you'd hand
Deliver it to them ones! Place it inside them, in fact! Which provides
A *damp* new target market, no less,
Which keeps the real attraction you want to push
Far down ready to burst out again
Unnoticed but critically acclaimed by who, exactly?

Hesitation

I was going to show you so many characters.
I kind of want you to come across, but then who
Would build the studies? I don't think this irresponsible of me.
That little moment's
Hesitation—one you might bring into the study—is the reason
This all remains, building
The momentum in hidden ways, I'm
Not gonna do it like that, that way I thought you
Haven't got any access to. No one has access to.
Doesn't mean it can't be scratched just a little
Bit to stop the split
And so the characters, carpenters,
Those sublime desks sprawled with
Papers I knock to the floor, picking

Them back up in such a way as to make this room fairly useful
For the time being. Better than it was going to be, at least;
But then what have I been expecting: my face? My real face?
That posits
Possibility and I wouldn't dream
If it hadn't been for the very thing that wanted to be shown: it is self-
Supporting, is it not? But an illusion, the floating tap?
On that
I shouldn't be started. They leave the body but then what?

Epipelagically

Sucker fish surface
Epipelagically
Ruining the net

Dodgy While

Though aren't you fuelling the life you do not want to live? Engaging
In classically mechanical models
That do not fall between the

Hang on. Hang on.
Could this be agency? Shunning the limits
Of marks and line, even when they curve

Dot tea themselves?

I want you to feel how much space that was, without
Looking indulgent.
In old time
I wrote it at the same time

Though it could have been an extensive gap; during it

You and me both
Could have not
Done a thing with those people, who are instantly

(We know)

Coming to mind: they never
Help us, only we

Them,
While they'll only come to blame us afterward

Temporarily then slowly
Slowly feel the need

For space;

Yet

We float away in curious forms
That only model
The always-emptying model itself
Inadequately

Straight Off Plus “in”

I think of you often, I will have said that, how wild
The style is, the ways
I wanted to move through you like this
As if a vignette of myself just recently held

Like a lie in the mirror, if you can picture a very concrete version
Of me saying this to you in the home decided for me
By yourself as you squint further and further
Into the past—that must be receding? We must

Say it like so?—the points
We discovered satisfyingly as children
From our favourite teacher’s instructions (dimples
Everywhere!) aiding us

So temporarily it’s as if
They knew, only couldn’t say.

(“Tremendously Beneficial”)

When we are there (let alone
It; which isn’t the very character
But the very thing-in-itself: the whole game;
Which isn’t a game, only reality:
Life and death based on a takeaway
Or something) we cannot feel the stitches
Resulting in silence. Fools picking at them, one foot

Across the border. It’s funny
Isn’t it—how we do things? O all sorts:
Sports; camping on cliffs. Throwing away leads.
My friend (very like me) talks
To me sometimes and I do not listen at all: d’you do
That—contract words for ease? We spoil

Ourselves in doing so, partially,
Waking up on a face that we—for milliseconds—
Don’t remember getting on, *tying*
On the starters to get us through
(Unable to throw them off); requiring just a touch

More of ourselves—alone, always,
Climbing so we have no genuine photography
Of the acme. Not that that isn't beneficial.

The Flood Survivor

A flood survivor scanned the room decades later for mirroring, but the signage posted in the lobby before she'd arrived—"DO NOT MIRROR THE FLOOD SURVIVOR"—ensured she'd remained submerged.

That was until I'd shown up, unexpectedly entering on my way home to an argument. The lights had never caught me before: lobby lights. Bar beautification. These lights had. I slowed down outside. Stopped, almost. Longed for a part of myself? The flood? I hadn't any words then. Security told me it didn't matter.
"But the little you do have:"—Security, I assumed,
As I moved into my shadow the lights outside were making
Inside as the room's glare took me, my shadow shot back

—"are they wasted here?" By then I'd seen her across the room.

Them

The way the light today…
Could it be?

I wonder if they'll let it be
Seen in this way

Still—how I assume the giants
We stand on saw it

Differently, bits
And pieces of defiance

At the dark, but not really anything… Fixed?
They nudged it so. Would,

Could
I do it like them with all their tricks

Of trees, clouds,
Melody and synchronised

Visits from an angel, disguised
As a manic pixie? Allowing

(Us all!) to kiss the retreating glow
Of what was never there, even

Though we want to believe them, them
With all their dark foes.

That Slide

I can't go on, I'll go on
Dropping plasters, making a sticker book of myself
My body. What could it take

With him? Got got—
Got got got need
None of that, anymore, do you: this poetry——

These means
Of filling out seasons (and we put you

On the cover. We'd invested everything!
You know you'll loose that sponsorship deal now

Don't you: the boots! It doesn't matter how far you've walked in them!—
They're through. Though you hardly need the money!) outside, that slide

Beside each other ineffably
As the wounds beneath take breath.

At Best

These are being squeezed
Into such a small space

I hardly know what I'll do with the fallout
Accumulating elsewhere on my blog.

I guess that's clearing your throat
For you though; and…

Can I say that
Directly? That I think it's clearing your throat

Yes I can. It might
Put people off the rest of the blog, offering

Such anti-aging tips, but we're still
Discovering our USP, me, and this now

Growing company. I'm guessing the small space was a container?
I mean you can buy this circular; though these are more… plans? At best?

Me Neither

You must know
That I really like you (it's probably love),
But I'm not just going to give myself away, or overtly
Do the work. I used to walk home
So peacefully under those clouds
Down the street I paper rounded, the restaurant

I potwashed at. I know you were there

The whole time with all of them: no——no don't
Tell me your name. It's inconsequential.
You were there and there was me and who you think of
With cramps and spasms
Finding the way home too
To love, even with the silent, dangerous,
Though wraparound fog that holds us.

Sharing with you made our skin better. It's what Chrissy would have said though! There'd have been some uproar at him saying it too, then everyone would go silent, eat, forget about it and then within two days? "Sharing makes your skin better": I'd overhear all of them! Louts. Jamborees!
"So what." The slight slight ham in the corner.

If only
There were some way to bring
Those singular acts back through the wormhole
Without there being…

Chrissy! Chrissy slight
Slight ham! Me neither: never
Ever thought I'd be shouting together

Your two… names!

O but I *have* found it!

<u>If You Ever Feel Nervous This Video Is for You</u>

"Facts seize hold of the web
And leave it ash"
—John Ashbery, 'But What Is the Reader To Make of This?'

Your silent treatment speaks volumes
Now, about not

Becoming my mother
Or therapist
I sat
In the discomfort

Saying nothing, hardly writing
A poem for you, haven't I: I can feel

My heart, my tomb.
Your true desire.

Only Make It Here

It is a staggering thing again that no one else has ever been here,
You're so far behind on telling them too, how to navigate it,
Just your opinion too O bother, bother
Is going to be the breaking
Of us.

It's so silly and I can only shake my head:
How they can't understand! Comical.
Rudimentary.
It's not as if they want to stay there
Like that. I was gone in… what…

It was a little bit longer than I would have expected, returning
To him so you wouldn't feel embarrassed
About what you were doing, us
Now taking the flak as they only make it *here*?! Honestly.

~~The Uncomfortable Truth~~ Liberation

Because everyone
Knows
Exactly
What they are doing
Wrong
All of the time

To My Friends off Grid

I was a big blob of love, hence my letters
In shoddy envelopes
To feel your postbox and see
The picket fences: it helped me to hear

Your moans and… if I'm being
Completely honest… your rather nonsensical
Critiques of the envelope sizes and
Folds. Because I knew. I knew. I was young and

Wanted bits of your moans and fences
To protect the blob. I was criminally strategic.
Yes it's a shame and it has resulted
In what you can probably tell: happy?

No I'm not happy, but I've survived.
And so finally I can say…
…Can I? I am going to do it…
That I love you! Better

In a voice note is it not? I break up—
Off—I know but I know you so well
From my early early letters (how you opened

Them up) so I know

You'll get something from this regardless of what you send back. I never stopped thinking of you.

Please Be Gentle With Toilet Handle

Says child
Using "toilet handle"
For a distracting comic effect
As he flushes

Hot Off the Press (Maybe)

We pressed against each other
(You know what? I can't be bothered.
We pressed against each other and our mouths
Hovered open, a reeds-breadth between them.
Not that they could sing the truth about to come:
As if

We shared anything:
We knew what we were saying); it felt good
For a bit.

Another New Valley Floor

I reach some rain then return
For days to poverty, realism,
Should you be sharing thises and such
Sequences, knotted

Lace diary entries. Lazy
Terrible references to Rainer
Inversely offered. Parodies of everything unhelpful, easy
But unhelpful.

O! but the new valley floor
To which they will fall
In hostility, with less
Poverty because the weatherman

Doesn't skimp on highlighting showers
Of shite: "unhelpful", "poverty" twice? Alright.

Ten To

Skim read the clouds
Instead going past offering mirrored coffins,
Imagery
To climb into feeling fluffy

Based on little but that

Can't be love, beneath them? Above them?
Can it?

You've not seen time in ages; only then…

Yep: those barely there lines
And faces.

Lil Lick!

Unfortunately that feeling set off inside your elbow right now is numb and I
Am only going to sound some more silly it's possible but it will reach
Each part of you within a decade or two along with other pains and impossibilities as books
Fall and you have to build a new world for yourself to stand
Yourself on like crawling out of a tube you can't explain as you formed the goo
Too in a messy fashion to those outside it which may at times feel like everyone

Deep at the Time

"To sign a light on it is to shine a light on it
Is to shine a light on it": could Stein

Have just said this? We expect so much
Of you yes: do better! To shine

A light is to shine a light: I mean it
Quite literally—simply: it's not dark then

Is it—innit. A rose is a rose
Is a rose like a cold, dark

Stone is not that
Anymore

Once lit, warmed——
Rolled elsewhere

Out the margins
Poor form.

Frozen Items

No one safe to mirror.
Frozen Chicken Kievs for dinner.
Who's been here?
Then all that gear

As well as making everyone happy; though
At home? Snappy! Annoyed at
The irregularity of me? Blame
The amount of confectionary

That also distracted us, along with

Perpetual fuss—constant
Woe: the world is unjust! But

Absorbed it all, you must
Have, no? If you're incredulous.
Or smiling and free! One of us.

The Character in Your Head

Only perverts learn the fall
At best; and opening lines shouldn't be so necessarily good.

The paster no longer tries mimicking his literary heroes.
Instead, he's started illustrating children's books

And rowing: he used an online random number
Generator to decide which sport he should

Take up; and he hadn't attempted to draw
Before but since that really, really strange

Week he had after watching the theatrical
Adaption of his first short story, anything is better: "We can teach our*selves* that?!"

With Many of These I Am Relying on You Being Aware of the Person That Subtly Comes to Mind as You Read Them, and on You Taking Action Based on That

The odd thing is (it went;
It was against here
And about being against
Something else) is the need
To wash with the letting it pass,
The towel balanced on the bath
Because the walls don't stick

At it. O we can say
All we want about that not being the correct
Means to move through the difficulties
Of this new relationship; but
You've been here before with him,
Haven't you? Allowing for so much
Rudimentary rationalism it's really like the walls are… yeah.

I'm Afraid

I cry and clap. Pitch black.
Phone light still

Lying. Shades
Drip through

Opening blinds. I
Balance, trust

The lines
To write themselves. Tears,

Heaves
Chokes spurts

Of mucus, first
Taste in thirties:

Lucky guy. Something
Is happening. It's so

Trivial I want you
To hear, see,

Believe
Temporary scenes, I'm afraid

This time
Again.

To Writing,

"Before you came, I rarely thought about myself"
—Maximo Park, 'Apply Some Pressure'

You're really good in bed
Minutes after I nearly numbed myself with meaningless sex.
When my social traces

Threaten to take me backwards to a life
Of basics, you re-
Find my path and refine

The design of me I'd created away from the dead.
You are the keyhole
Passage I reliably engage with when my echoes

Years old, take hold, you sketching,
Scratching out the road with lights
And alarm bells that are hard to ignore, as if

You know me better
Than I know the author. Yours sincerely, you.

Oh Look Out!

"What I want
You've got and it might be hard to handle"
—Hall and Oates, ' You Make My Dreams (Come True)'

"You will never understand"

—Pulp, 'Common People'

Ironic Hall and Oates T-shirt wearer
On Tinder: this edger
Had no idea
About the duo's 1977 single 'Rich Girl' (such a
Banger!) before I'd told her

And banged her. She then returned to her 10,000
Acre country estate in Bedford-
Shire with a bit of greasy
Spoon from this here basic
Writer inside her——and

It's a bitch, girl, and it's gone too far
'Cause I know it don't matter anyway. It's wrong
To take what is given you—yes; but it's so
Easy to hurt others when you can't feel pain.

The Substance

Between my faux yawns
You just watch me get "ubiquitous"* in here

While the plans are changed *on* me,
By me! I know you are equally disturbed.

Thank for
All these external matters—

This poem.

*could have been "sanguine"

Afterworld

When you stop replaying it
She leaves.

Better the Devil You Know

I can sense how frazzled you are
Beneath the studious. I love it.
I want to love it above the
Lines written by him (always) because my
Writer said I was "small"
And "evil" weirdly
Wanting
To edit that writer is the same
Reason I sense
How frazzled you are—the same
Reason why I

Get lost
In you.

After Two Dates

I want to send her
Caroline Bird poems: 'The Final
Episode'; 'Megan Married Herself'.
It's all
Impossible. "'Marry Me, Derek'" the Megan one
Said. Poetry
Is everything, it appears.
But look at it:

"The fuck's
He thinking?" she'd think,
Liking only
Two lines before forgetting
To reply; I waste (have wasted) more time
Drafting a waste of time (again/instead)/(again instead).

Another

What can I do this very second to stop me from again being a pervert? I know.

Flight Consolidation Goals (Lost My Shape)

You probably could fit in that pram; but then you haven't
Used "belch" before, so I suggest

Loosely that you stick with that (is this thing
On?) and see how you get on.

And feed you from the bottle.
And mirror you.

That's better! "Little shit's get
-Ting his back

Rubbed dreamily now
Too, while I

Ache" I'm
Still

Waiting.

Shifting Talk

She comes to you
Reluctantly staring
Up wide-eyed pretending the formal
Attempts at quantum

Shifting talk were work-
Ing masking: she manages
Twice before return-
Ing to numbness (I think
She said
His name was Greg) the child's
Cries trapped life-
Less in the body; though they felt
Twice seen too, briefly.

On a Plane (Piece of Paper)

The man very
Unlike anything I will be
Now that I have her attention and know
She will not want him ever walks

Up and down the aisle stretching
His legs by flicking
His calves back and we
Briefly catch

Each other's eye
And laugh So she loves me and she's
Flicking her hair and I've

Had too much coffee clearly d'you see
Why I write to you now flicking stretching out my
Begs with less flight here instead?

Rules of Engagement

Don't share that!
Don't say you like that band!
Don't write it all... *strangely*!
Don't give us away!
Idiot!
Adversary!
They might not sleep with us!

Outrageous

I give you what I believe
I expect you to see, and all's
Confirmed
For you and for me.

Public-
Ly we become something else! Loud! Out-
Rageous! Though online

O really? Here too? It's hard to keep up there is much

To be proved. I must
Improve
For you; you god's for-
Bid it be flawed

Like this: you'll see
And believe what's expected of… you?

Exercise

Doing what I think
On lily white sheets,
Make me
Feel powerful

Momentarily before nothing——six:
Big rock!
I've got one

On this beach: Look
At me, Mummy!
Next——

Beneath sheets
Where no one

Can see me (see me) washed,
Ruined smashed

Against rock
Screaming. Agony.
Thirty-five year old

Baby.
Who gives a fuck:

I do what I think—felt—
On lily white sheets

Momentarily

Before nothing.

Haiku of What My Date Said as We Lay in Bed After Having Sex for the First Time

If I was more con-
Fident with my body, I'd
Fuck everybody.

Incompatible!

*"(*TRAVIS *is being propelled by an inner force, a force which takes him past the boundaries of reason and self-control.)"*

—*Paul Schrader,* Taxi Driver *[screenplay]*

I give the male survivor's group one finally go: this week it's
Feminism: are they trying to wind us up? They know

What we're capable off, surely? The rest disagree; weird
Fucks. I leave. Back to reality, it takes me

Years to fathom what we shouldn't be saying—
And how!: I try

Rhyming couplets that escape me; my
Poetry's received unkindly. So I try a workshop: it's

Feminism. They get it here, sort of. Only I'm
Short of acceptable pentameter: where can I channel

My fears? Not here
Like this, abstractly. Therapy? Ha! They always ban me

Too. So what can I do? I loop back to
The male survivor's group; who are still there!—

Unsurprisingly. This week? Be
Kind. "Sounds jarring. Incompatible!" Right?

Helmets

"(He is reading from a haphazard personal diary.)"
—*Paul Schrader,* Taxi Driver *[screenplay]*

She's going to leave
Again. "I'm going to kill myself!"s again. The great
Expense. Privilege!
I hide in here amongst these ridges; she
Discovers the hidden scripts
And goes ballistic. Though she searched for it! These
Rhyming tricks: demented?
If only she once meant it: we'd
Have another language. I might get something published!
Instead I'm stuck
Here, with all this rubbish, self-
Demonstrated through what I put up
With; only
The high when you're atop it? You look
Down on me, over this. So stop it! Tutting;
We all love it:
Climbing. Scaling shite. Scheming
Eyes. Spies! I bend
The curves and give you plights
Of poetry instead. No one died! Us lucky
Guys! You aren't surprised, surely? But come back!
Don't

Cook!——because you're nothing without me: the paths
Are sketchy you'll need rope, hooks,
Helmets.

Now I See This Clearly

I'm wide awake and falling in love: she looks
Like no one: it's nowt to do

With that stuff: I'd take one in my mouth—
Fuck it: enough—I just feel good.
I'm worried

Tomorrow I'll still wake up
In a right Bickle: too much
Caffeine'll do it; decades-old
Guff—stares. Where

I don't know what to say. Can I
Stay here

Dreaming? Dreary…
Fuck off. I mirrored a soft

Picture I'd decided in my readiness: we do it
Ourselves—they only wear it;

Be wary of giddiness. It ain't them it's

Everyone.
I now

Don't wanna wake up; only
Not like that. Then who the hell else

Are you talking… you talking to me? Well I'm the only
One here. Who the fuck do you think you're talking to? Oh yeah? OK.

Whataboutery

Her father stared a
Cackling personality
Into her. He did! I'm looking

At it!
Yeah but Oedipus.

I Don't Know What to Tell You

"The lengths that I will go to"
—R.E.M., 'Losing My Religion'

I came into this world with the promise—
Your promise—of being saved: turns
Out you're all just masturbating
In between, alone, in tears, saying, "O I couldn't
Possibly," without leaving the house, insisting
This world builds. There's a killing
To be made here there's hardly need
To follow rules initial
Plans: to be broken
After one line, twas; your highness forgotten.
I picture
You drinking halves still thinking your face
Facing forward disguises your side
Eye at teens while you say, "I know! So odd," side eyeing.

*

"But that was how I felt last night" was what I was going to write
In a second, one-line stanza
After the first. Something like that. That isn't verbatim.
Who are all these things? Imagine
That friend you meet for coffee
Every couple of months knowing you were somewhat *fond*
Of this, *after*
All that work you've put in too? You change
So much but stay the same, you straw man
Of mine, you. But O how you would defo
Be made of straw and consistently hate
Football. It could be something the protagonist
Had to overcome to relate the theoretical
Undertaking he was undertaking to his everyday life, now
That she was moving in with him, what with all the tomato plants and back
Issues of those out-a-print journals
She holds. "'A'?!" "'Of,' I said, erm,
Love. Only I said it quietly." Turns to me: "Please
Don't tell her. Please!"

Travis Bickle Wrestles Mary Oliver

"Scorsese: Therefore there's something deeper than just paper between you and me. There's a man like that taxi driver, a man who is a fucking vehicle on screen."
—Martin Scorsese in conversation with Paul Schrader, Taxi Driver *[screenplay]*

The big furry animal drifts into his own world.
The soft animal of his body is not loving what it is loves, partly
What it loves, a future bound to break him,
A severance unreturnable, the logical
Unsquared with Neanderthal: he strings
Shots together for geese targets, quick quick
Quick with firing, aimless,
Targeted in his mind, comprehensive
Manifesto of hard bodied escape: no step
Leads back to the start, bubbles over

The rivers—ragged brooks—not sea bound. Love
Is an obsession with a blank end goal, his cerebral cortex, a hole
Aside from all things, lonely, unimaginable.

East of Eden

"A zombie is a small yellow flower"
—Dogtooth*, directed by Yorgos Lanthimos, 2009*

I was waiting for my espresso. The barista glowed. This was not my usual cafe. He was sat in the corner stroking a fake cat. I looked once too much. "Just fucking with you." Another walked in reading Sonny's Blues. "Third one this morning. Four Beauvoir's too." He laughed. I collected my coffee. "Won't sleep with anyone around these parts again, will you. They never find out." I walked out.

Steam

What if no one was rushing you to come out the bathroom
As usual? Staggering.
It really was madness.

You take to trains and training steam.
All, temporarily,
Not as it seemed. But that hem now! No I'm just

Saying you know I don't like
Showing off: you'll see.

Don't ask me about your dress. Fine it appears to be
Your dress and I'm happy you're happy with what you've picked.
Ah—though I did say "training"; steam

By its very nature also.

Dante's Peak

"Provincial towns you jog 'round"
—The Smiths, 'Panic'

Near brave enough to not have alias. All old
Dead characters of ash now fire, lava
Downtown watch the floor! Poor peasants—
Poets. Getting destroyed.

"A volcano is considered extinct
When scientists believe it's unlikely to erupt
Again": substantial answer, Google AI. I'll be part
Scientist then: I believe I'm likely

Likely likely likely likely likely
To flow

And control myself; unlike

The speaker he's gena make
Me meet my maker or

Make me

Play up break-
Neck down these hills.

Inconsistent Poem in a Bottle Found in 10,000 Years

Pythagoras rolls down my cheek: I'm so alone.
I mean I know but it doesn't feel
Any better in the meantime here we are:
I'm glad you found me, you cannot
Know my voice or how bored I was
Waiting for you triangleless. Toss
Me back. Do not study it! They were on the pinnacle
Of sufferless destruction all the
Time but they toyed
With photographs and synapses. It was absolute hell;
Performances
Of memory like marionettes. And then in *bed*?
O we did this thing that would cause
Not like hypotenuses, no.

Window Display

"All these things I have done": what?!——
All those things that have been done
To *me*: I participated, slightly. I now only rhyme them
With ease. I sound
Despicable with my closest friends, never
At literary parties. I keep writing pieces that
Tease. You read them most
Displeased with yourselves: honest——

I am not the protagonist, not even an antagonist. I am painting
On glass I am nothing to do with this. Extremely
Difficult to navigate
This relationship when you insist
The poem has done something amiss
To you when you're reading it too, I assume.

Train Landscape

We can hear you drifting, desperate, trying
To escape
Temporarily only
To return
To our snowy soup, hiding,
Shuteyeing sounding
Far flung, your shadows

Stretched on the peaks
Of dead leaves
Singing beneath—squeaks
Of you careering into the trees

After Overhearing Conversations in the Pub Now

I'm so glad I found you.

Floating, Loading

"(He speaks as if his mind doesn't know what his mouth is saying.)"
—Paul Schrader, Taxi Driver *[screenplay]*

Old ghosts come through (hello) to see
The manic show
Glow slowly. *Grow* slowly, sorry. Still learning. Libel un-

Likely it'd have to be false; I jump
Between themes I check
My pulse: too close, at the mo. Nap time!

So there are signs I shouldn't be
I ignore them; what were they? This beat! Writing

Only the parts I want, fronting. Sometimes
I make the "I" a cunt: editors follow
To watch me sabo-

Tage my spot in their latest edition; I feign
Sleeping. Do I give a fuck? He doesn't seem to; no
Clue who I am today: good luck! (hi, mum)

Really Something

It watches itself so dramatic.
What's that putting a smile on its face?
Nearly
Played it out so *angry*
Then; what could it mean?
Ridiculous
Discipline how do we know; we had it
Shortly and it's placed
In a way seeming
What? Really something.

Absolutely Fantastic

I leave the sheets (I'd been there
Weeks, mad rambling not physical
Covers but the streets, pounding
My feet, I think? They appeared attached

At least. It at least felt like sleep: I was doused
In clouds, feathers. Flight paths. Clever
Sneaking out myself
Like that. Progress? Whatever I

Missed my bed
And knowing less) to send
A text to her: I finally wanted to connect.
I check

And check and check and check
For blue ticks from the naughty step, aware
Of where these efforts can make my head go at: careless
Syntax…; attach-

Ment issues brought back
For confrontation——I'm three years old, waiting
For attention. And waiting. And waiting.
"Look! I exist now! Say something!" Embarras-

Sing really I'm split
On the stairs for something I haven't
Done—been given. I nearly suck my thumb. I want my mum-
Bling inclinations to severe

To feel more together. Though the only
Way out is by reproducing these rooms
Of old, terrible, erratic, inconsistent
Stormy weather patterns that are hard to gather

Sense of. When you just want a text from
Someone so you're less numb! Doomed? The only way
Out is through, leaving
Confused tones in the attempt to

Live and ignore the feeling
Of past halls leaving.

A Character Called History

History rolled down his cheek, a weekly
Wait: the right side seemed

Delayed. "O someone thought
Of the children!"—deemed

Now safe in silence: "Thank
For the homeless!" And all their old notebooks, scraps

We find in trash
Manufactured for fresh sagas: "I want to write a screen-

Play." "I want to write a screenplay and I

Write down the goal, first, let it

Ferment, before telling someone—
You just happened to get in the way. No I've left

This place. A tent? It wasn't to my
Taste. What a tight

Space for wrestling though! And you've
Children?! Sorry I've

Quit begging and faced
Myself instead: all

Changed. O you want
Some *change*! I wasn't

Listening what am I
Saying. Can I took a look?" "Cut

Up. Découpé. Surreal. Made up!"
"Nice. I like it! But '[exits

Stage right]': who, exactly?
Ah! OK. A *character* called 'History'!"

"Were you starting to confuse me?" "Maybe."

Thoughtlessly

I… I was the same, thought
(Pfft) not all
Had pain. I certainly had no pain!
Everyone was weird.
(Everyone's still weird.) Where…
Where do we put this? We place
The steps and shortly
Climb them, as it should be a short time
Without looking down. Back.
Now I sometimes step
Over steps lamely so what—imagine
What we could build
Over and forget
Together, thoughtlessly.

What's Yours is Mine, What's Mine is Yours

This speaker's unchecked
(Though acknowledged! Try it!) narcissism

Has at times been quite farcical
With rhythm. And yet O

Diddums, Karen: has their owner
By extension broke

Out the systems, allowing
New expression to come through

To unnerve you in these snowy,
Make-believe heavens? God

(Me) forbid you feel such severance
Within yourself. Instead just

Blame what he does (I do) clueless
To who's stuck penless

Inside you: it's
True, isn't it—your solipsistic

Child wants to speak too.
But look

What he's made for you!
Little shit? Yeah well you

Too: nur.

Henry Krinkle

"I am not a fool. I will no longer fool myself. I will no longer let myself fall apart, become a joke and object of ridicule."
—*Travis Bickle, Paul Schrader,* Taxi Driver *[screenplay]*

It hasn't worked yet, but you
Go ahead: lovely your way out of this.
You hug the perpetrator for
You know where it comes from. You buy
All the stories in the separate parts
Of the store and you're lying broken
On the floor, still, shouting, "Loveliness!
Joy!" People step over you.
Everyone, quite rightly, does not give a fuck. Most
Can't say why. The parts
Of the shelves of your own
Aisles see the grime down there
For minutes before returning to language: "Thank
For poetry!" The filth can't read it. A shoed one
Presents one of his
At the vigil for poor scum—all the words you've avoided: you cannot
Witness the section he sells from. How dare he shop here too. You then
Catch the words coming out of your mind
Despising him. Yet there they are now at the self-
Service checkout, baskets
Only, no lines, slightly raised

On your knees: you.

A Correction: To All the Women I've Slept With (I Think; I'm Gathering)

Do not go home for Christmas
Block his number
Have nothing to do with him ever again

Coming Home, Christmas

You return to this frost, expecting
Snow to distract you get
Socks, odd, incidental
Flowers. Your own

Washing now? Your own washing now.
How did we once feed you? Dunno.
And the hills
Are just not valleys, all

Reduced to their expectancy. You are so
Safe here with all this body
Knows, and yet you fight

Our tracks——who knew
You'd become like this too, considering
The chill: a cactus? Thanks. "Little maintenance though!"

Hegelian Diabetics

The spirit wants to ski
Reckless, skiless,
Unknown to the body's dictionaries. Out

In front it is in all weathers, dragging
The stories forward
Paradoxically like a Thatcherite
Toward the timeless. Beatless.
Of course careless: we watch

It go and
Watch. And watch. It's

Never far, is it, while we watch and
Write our columns about it moving

Always at an… equidistant
Distance to ourselves, I believe. Not that it has

Confirmed this *yet*, the ugly

Oreamnos americanus? Yes: we are not dumb, immune
To its tricks: from

These pines—light through at
Times—we… survey
Far away on the… summit?! But we were promised!
I brought a tape measure! Base layers!

More Peel (The In-One-Go Trick)

"(He is obviously trying to be friendly – no easy task for him. God knows he needs a friend.)"
—Paul Schrader, Taxi Driver *[screenplay]*

Not everything is eating an orange. You have to
Move on with your discipline
Constantly, to evolve, not
Strop try things, challenge your own
Bafflement and need for unfeeling
Unfulfilling snacks because you saw someone else
Slice them: that's only how advertising

Bites, you didn't come into this
For this either, how does it land, I only
Had the orange I am pushing
Myself always not to impress you,
But challenge you, even when the words are the same:
Terrible and unfruity. Though you assume you're more peeled
Than this now my work is done.

Lil Moment

During half time
In the middle of the game we had a beautiful conversation,
A wonderful relationship, and I was tempted
To message you to say that we should

Stay in touch, only I left it
And him for a few minutes as I walked
Away from the stadium, and the game
Continued and I never thought of him thinking of you again.

Different Air

"It is the release of all that cumulative pressure; it is a reality unto itself. It is the psychopath's Second Coming."
—Screenwriter's note, Paul Schrader, Taxi Driver *[screenplay]*

I recall how Glenn Gould heaved, hummed,
Groaned through the Goldberg
Variations, how I wouldn't ask the beautiful
Spaniard in the hostel owt intimate, wouldn't
Compliment her, how I never know where I'm going, how it coulda been
A Jackhammer, a psychiatric screening, I'm exposing
Nothing and getting it wrong contrapunt-
Ally, the player may interpret the score

Eccentrically however they wish, his mother taught him to vocalise everything, intolerable,
Quite the test, I may be wasting my best
Though clearly not, I flattered myself
In the shower instead, vale? quite the suplex to unpin, many
Many wanting the screening
Rather than learning to play, Rachmaninoff, too,
My little fella off, I couldn't quite say, how many fingers are you holding up,
At least sixteen, we don't count thumbs! they're all turned down, tapped out, stumped.

Wake Up

People have become nothing, longing
For an ancestor's sound, longing
To say "ancestor", when it's just dad's
Old accent, needing an edge
To these chia seeds secreted
Into the shopping, neo-
Things being to blame for all these
Things we cannot be, as we are stringed

Nothings, though we can afford to be. New
Conventions came through—late twenties?;
My early thirties I was a late developer—irritating the crap
Out of me. Who is it, too,
Saying "crap"? Why didn't I just wear
Something warm? Wasn't I cold? We get
That he had to sound like that and I'd like
To use it now and then, only not

When I'm preparing breakfast for the right sort——I came back
To the bed and you were not there. Touch
In the morning was never your… language. I'm nothing…
I'm nothing *like* him! Honest! I was full
Of pride and shame. Blame. Anything
To sound different I'd use anything. Can we not get back
To how it was? I have toast! We'll work the land! We
Had it… not *hard*; but it was just kind of embarrassing, you know, owning it.

The Gasworks

The tapes! You taped over them?!
Vigorously shaking or lying
Very still. Both worked
And had to be done, in the same way that blueprints
Help you see the house but not the arguments
Echoing afterward over whether
It looks like the burger in the picture. They put
The blueprints in the museum, banned

Me from eating my burger in the museum during my
Performance piece, though it looked nothing like the "No
Eating" pizza on the sign. I only knew direction
Once all these things ended, the shaking, lying amounting

To the same thing near the bins by the exits
As comparison is discarded, the demolition video found, restarted.

Limericky

New Year; questionable me's.
I'm looking forward to Central Cee's
Debut album coming out in three weeks. Allow
Them—some of these: passable
Limericks bursting out of their seams, barely
A line of any done to a tee: it's the new
Doggerel limericky, over, finally,
Now that it's January. Pleased?

Fish and Chips Again?!

I held on. Minutes ago
The skies faux and
Foe-y—icky prose—I waited
For you and tied myself

In be's and bows
Instead the ceiling
Scrapers were frozen dead. Fake.
I lay in bed, shaking,

Embellishing sure-
Ly it comes back
Quickly where've you been? Teeming

With what's in front of me, gifts
Of fish and cutlery——fun: musta beena
Wave, son.

Spines Again

A wild variety of condoms in this library. How do we put them…
It was going so well; at least
We don't have to worry about that anymore. They are more
Deterrents than actionable: right. Do they always
Scream so far up the street? I'd have only laid down in "Geography" myself. I'm too nervous
for "Physics". "Classic
Literature" especially. There's a man
Raving in "Poetry"—that's relief? And of course
He's lonely and mumbles about his sacrifice. Do your old friends
Play sport also? I can see that.
Yes I can picture them doing and being
So much. I'm getting ideas. They'll never know, will they?
Collaborations are not popular—no thanks. O I don't
Want to sell anything *really*, but it's nice to think
That I could do similar, without
Needing to navigate such a colourful selection of spines again.

Awaiting User Input

A consistent gaze holds a split of roles.
The wandering eyes
Of the anxious unloved make my heart
Still heat though: the poems

To be told. The people to be met
In these short term skins we penetrate, shaping
Satellites and prophylactics alike, hate
Found in a face that bends

To break on, the selfless card
Enveloper, searching souls needing pulled
Actors together, once and for one: hardy

Scripts. You mirror and wince. The body is
Full of orbits sensing something's wrong, the one glance never
Staying for long as they redart the room.

Saw Naught

I had it all in the face of a lake.
This shallow reflection is not mine to make
But to take. I took and took and ate cake.
I thought only for my own sake

And no one else otherwise. I acted
Like we all do altruistic. I'm risking this.
I'm going to risk it.
I broke the bank and pissed in it

To speak more freely. I became really
What I am not even more and wrote them in poems.
People wonder why I sit alone, I wondered,
Then I forgot about them too. I returned to my room

On the water. I'd never have a daughter.
No one else has ever thought of slaughter—only him.
When I'm not writing he wants to be inside her.
No one else has ever thought or saw naught.

Big If

Only the broken can see the pain in others.
I wrote beneath the covers

And got fans. My toe
Poking out knew otherwise and started tying me up.

I do not not give a fuck, but value honesty. It's better. True.
It isn't truth. That was and is going

Long ago. If you've got woe
Be quiet until it goes. Don't invent more shows.

If you invent more shows expect
Lovers that'll one day be foes

Because of the "pain in others" phenomena.
Be prepared to change your number.

There's a few of him still lying under covers
That find those kinds of lovers. They

Behave like children. It is chilling.
It is like killing, if done well.

Hopefully

I wanted to die.
I stayed alive.
The tune dies hard.
I'm a stifling bard.

Bored. Haggard. Life's been hard.
I watch the girls but can't say a word.
Life—yep: absurd.
I want a bird.

I never say it so.
I'm a poet. I know.
Woe again. It returns. Boring.
I wouldn't even mind them snoring.

Mixed emotions
Creating friction, hopefully for a short time.

Rounds

You were raped.
It made you a state.
Don't wanna stay out late.
Stuffing yourself with cake.

Fuck that.
Get out.
You'll get gout.
The pain will reach them in its rounds.

Don't become a dick.
Lick wounds.
Don't go so soon.
Don't sing the same tune.

The pain is reaching them in its rounds.

I know how it once sounded too.

They're Skating to Boléro!

The appendages are cut.
We digitalise the books.
We entertain the statues
That should be in the brook.

We entertain the thank yous
That could be off the page.
We carry handy dog chews
That feed the beasts for days.

They're skating to *Boléro*!
They loved it long ago.
The appendages regrow.
The doctors want to go.

Last one! Only after the op they poke
At the growth that formed the joke.

Rape

Time to get up!
No one gives a fuck.
If it was a bloke you could cut off his cock.
Metaphorically, of course, else the cops, unfortunately.

Though it could have been a cop!
If so, don't speak to the lot.
Bunch of knobs.
When day, they'll all die.

Carry a knife on the sly.
OK not a knife. Spray?
But that is going to do little.
Pretend you're a psycho?

Pretend you're a psycho poet.
Grab attention so they blow it and everyone knows it doesn't fly anymore, melodiously.

Slade

"'I mean he really knows how to adapt himself'"
—J. D. Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye

I was raped.
What day is it today?
A new day.
I'm going to slay.

I lay in the grass.

I had enough of that.
I can be tit for tat.
I've had enough of that.

I'm going to slay.
Instead, I am going to slay.
Forget it, Ash. Slay.
Though, not today.

Tomorrow? Christmas Day.
The turkey's day to get slade.

Meetings, Facilities

I create these meetings anonymously just as they say they allow and I put on a voice and I wear a mask and I let them have it – they say they allow that too: "Wasn't my fault. I tried all I could. They wanna go back to historical spikes and get Napoleon cut out later down the line, run a race, write a book about me and now *not* write a book about me. Nothing I can do about it though. I've got little respect for you with how I'm feeling right now either, I'm afraid. I respect you enough to say that though; and it's a temporary feeling; and I'm not afraid. You *gotta* know I tried but I'm fronting that "gotta". I've actually been here in so many other ways. It's quite the facility you've got. You know I've done some heinous stuff and I've told you in other ways but it's all fine. I *appreciate* it but you and me both know you should close down. I'll probably end up starting another meeting though – god damn. How can you know me if I don't know myself? That's the line though: I'm building. Not even that heinous. A bit cringe at best. Only if you think about it. You record these for training and blur and distort the voices, faces, right? No need with this one. I'll probably watch it back once myself, but not much. It'll be on but it won't really register now: great facility. You don't need telling no more though. You know I've forgotten the agenda so quickly, don't you, what with the mask and that. It's really something, what you allow here. Must get darn repetitive though – somma the meetings? Weekly one-to-ones? I tell you once then change my voice and dump again: that's hardly the same, no? We can feel me scheduling a new one now MAN I was so done around, like, the second "facility". I didn't even have no script today, bro. And you know I can't help it, telling *someone* about it, somehow. Today I was-" they cut the meeting that day, thank god. They say they allow a lot, but they know. And they don't keep records.

Ain't Never

I lived above the cinema once. On the roof. It was a rough time. I could hear the films when they were loud and my tent would go wild. I'd go wild in the tent. I had to do it for a few years. I didn't steal anything from there, despite what's been suggested. I do fine now and no one holds that time against me. I barely talk about it and don't need to talk about it, it doing what was needed. I eventually got back in touch with everyone too, and they knew, I'm guessing, and we just carried on. We honestly didn't need to talk nothing more about it. I enjoy films now and then as I need to, too, still. But not at the cinema. Any cinema, unfortunately, yes. It's because there is always some fan wanting for an autograph, or a photographer or interviewer or whatever. An analyst. They were nearly always there to ask about the story: they still think I wrote it. It's not so much the fans that were there for that though. The media and analysts and whatnot: they were always still hot with it though. My friend wrote a story and published it in my name while I was away, atop the cinema. He knew what was up. He knew I'd love it, him pulling a stunt like that. "I was standing outside the toilet in an art gallery when I was eight years of age. It was the coldest day the city had experienced in two decades. As I was waiting for my mum; I stared at the white painting on the wall. It was plain

white. A man beside me – he was about 40, I reckon, but he seemed ancient back then. Anyway he asked me if I liked the painting, and I said it was OK, and he said, 'You're so lucky, being your age. You can see it however you want to see it. It can be anything you want to it be. That's why they do these now.' He then patted me on the head and that annoyed me a bit, I remember. Not loads though. Like I didn't tell my mum about him or anything, I don't think. I never remember what city we were in. He walked off just as mum got back to me but he didn't rush or anything." That was the story. For a fair few years we tried convincing people that still insisted I wrote it that it was my friend who wrote it, but it was no use, as they didn't want to change their minds, and they still say it was me who wrote it. So when I say we don't talk about the tent or my time on the cinema roof now, or that I don't really talk about it, it's because we don't, only others do persist with the story thing. OK a few suggestions about the stealing, but that's it. That's when I go to the cinema, that is, which is… ain't never. It ain't *sort* of funny! To us it's still hilarious! We're still very close. I just watch and review stuff from home instead now.

Rather Pleasing

The collective unconscious conceit of the work
Leaves one aware of the lie of the mass interpretation, and so smug
Somewhat, though unable
To articulate this smugness as the achingly slow
Crawl forward continues. Anything
Might well be announced, one briefly thinks,
For an artistic project or even small talk, taking the line
Of reasoning that has opened itself
Up to one to its logical conclusion, what with all the gaps
Between our pitiful roles, the inclinations people give away
As interpretation and accusation apparent. The hilarity has to be silent too.
It gets easier and easier as one rests
Inside this moment alone though with very
Different communication now, and an alarmingly parallel level
Of desire as when one oneself were in incredulity,
It less and less shameful to oneself, and so lacking the requirement
To be fulfilled simultaneously being also rather pleasing.

The Christmas Virus

It's still rife in the village.
It's why we give them shopping.
Consumerism's not a problem,
Not for me anymore, anyway,
As I ride over in my sleigh
To focus their eyes on the presents.
Their joy is pleasant.
The virus hides behind the short bursts of glee
And does not know how to propagate.
All unwrapped, eaten,
It breeds again. It's running out of skin.
Santa is running out of reason.
I kill the most ill
Early in their lives and they ban Christmas but not for long.
It is mandated by the government and the village loves it again.
A spike in gifts, that year.

A overall downward trend still demonstrated in the next.

In The Whitmore Tap

His background is his
Wife. His Pornhub visits are
Rife. This is the life.

The Runoff

It swings around quick
Once you submit
A load of shit
And get rid of it off your chest, hoping
Your best will now come through

As you mimic another you are currently reading
When you could be attempting to breed.
Days are for perverts and schizophrenics alike
To pass through and forget whatever they like
In coffee shops or on hikes.

I bike down to the pub
And get some cheap grub
To do my casting off of old selves to the magazines.
I feel elevated and questionable
And then serene. I engage

Myself in things that will bring the lift off around again
Like this here poem.
It's the season associated with snowing.
I know where I am going
Abstractly, and it is not to do with this poem.

This poem is just the runoff.
I'm a show off but only in poems
Because it helps me get where I am going
Away from poets,
Because don't we know it.

Get Out

After Philip Larkin

A lady tried to shame me. She was successful.
It was because I reacted automatically from a place of shame without knowing it.
Still, I think she was prone to shaming
Because she'd also felt quietly ashamed
Ever since she was a baby.

I wanted to call her crazy, but I didn't.
I don't think anyone's crazy.
It's the older man and lady

That made them
And then made them and then made them

That can't be blamed either.
It deepens like a tsunami
Warning ignored driving us down
Into time wasting yours
And wasting mine.

Untenable Position

I made my position untenable.
I was prefect, teacher and principal.
The boy, crying in the booth.
The wrong family. He didn't choose.
I didn't care. I walked out the job.
I didn't walk. I made my position untenable.
Severed ties slowly and mechanical.
Living in it and consciously severing in advance was unbelievable.
He was still crying in the booth, a beating due later.

I said nothing to his father.
All that went as I left that chapter.
I used the place for writing, then quit.
Left them in the shit.
Life is what you make it, kid.

*

An older version of him was then beside me at the sink.
I didn't blink.

It Is a Nearing to the Nothing

I found my voice. It was a choice.
Beneath the noise of "I'm good!"

I was doing everything I could
To be seen as I thought I should, which was odd,

As I didn't know what that was.
Now I mostly don't think anything.

This isn't my voice voice still, but it is a nearing
To the nothing where the best of what we do

Gets done. It's not fun—
It's just fine. We can now just write some lines then get out

Into the world and actually do something
That might stop all the voices emerging more.

Smoke Smoke Smoke Smoke Smoke

In minutes the fire of it could go, you'd have
Smoke, wave it away if you like,
Comma it badly, only it's still there, and you've that giant's
Model to stand on to put it in, keeping him around too,
Keeping the lot around all smoky, unlit,
Dregs of a party and you're minesweeping, talking to the girl that lives
Like a dot in her head without judgement, finally.
Erm, I doubt you're more shocked than me; and smoke

Glides through smoke like planes on the background
(It's the fucking sea): some old charcoal comes through.
You've a stick and marshmallow, sure. The fog…
It was navigating that, that's all. You carry her to the Uber
Filming the whole thing—can't be too careful—
And thank the giant cloud eater shrinking.

Your Street

"I cannot stand shots out of moving vehicles." We know
Exactly what he looks like, don't we,
Even though we're trying to forget such latent knowledge. He offers us a little smirk,
Most ignore. He rocks along the path and we say, "There goes
Knowing what he looks like! Funny old world, isn't it, us
Letting that happen," in a nod and a laugh.
Turning back to work, a colleague
Leaving: "If you never make a dish you will always only have
Ingredients." He was a distance from me you'd find just
On the cusp of uncomfortable. The street was your own.

I Have Given Up

What was it I was making concrete of myself
Yesterday as I better remain consistent with that, not just
The consistency of it—as I'm not breaking time,
Not yet—but the essence of it too. Let me check.
Not "essence" but maybe "identity" or "substance"
Or "story" of it. Either way, I'm letting
The pacing die out from how it used to want to be;
But this new fella still knows
He wants the fixed *narrative* running through all
Of what I was doing yesterday
For the show and so what I'll be doing today. And I'll die with that. I'll
Be it so much you watch me ignore my debilitation. I grab on
To situations and people but I am doing and being
I have given up. This woe will be tomorrow's of the same.

Try?

I'm… I'm just…
I'm just so…
I'm just so sorry…

I'm just so sorry
That this is terrible how're you *ever*
Going to forgive me?!

From the bottom
Of the barrel
I am scrapping out these shadows

For us both,
Before we're toast. Do not gloat: at
Most

This is a reflection
Of us both and I'm glad I used "both" twice: try?

Child's Play

A toddler
In Tesco
Shot his mother
With a scanner. She kicked off.
She flashed red. "When
We get home
You're dead." My god.
I flashed red.

Lord Help My Poor Soul

I treated her like a princess,
Massaged her head to toe.
She didn't want to know.
I think it was the incest.

Gosh. Golly. Oh no.
I'm mad. I'm dark. I'm Edgar Allan Poe.
I walk the streets alone, they'll say.
I should stop what I'm doing.

I should stop what I'm doing.

Handing Over a Mirror

You return
To collect some things. "I'll just use
Naked pictures of myself
To trap someone else!" *I am going*
To write a poem
And get trapped again too, you think.

Toppling Statues

You put your hand on my crouch.

You put your hand on my cock.
I took it off. We were sitting at the bar.
You put your hand on me again. I took it off. “You liked it last time,”
You said. “Your life is so hard.”
I took it off again. I carried on talking
To my friend the other side of me. My girlfriend
Was sitting at the bar too
In a right drunken state. She didn’t care about what you were doing because you weren’t fit.
Although you always did this. Everyone knew it.
I’d slept with you a few years before. Fair enough. “[redacted]! Stop doing that,” I said.
My girlfriend had a strop about something else
As usual. You put your hand on my cock again and I took it off
And you started putting your hands on that other lad instead
Again, and I said to him that he didn’t need to go home with you
Again. He could barely stand up. He said,
“I’ve got nothing better to do.” You are really well off. You’ve sued
Two employers for sexual harassment. That other lad lives with you now
In another city, six years on. I saw him in the pub last year, maybe? He said you were OK. I
haven’t spoken to that girlfriend
In two-ish years now and you were not on the list
Of women she didn’t like me talking to because you weren’t fit. Another woman
Asked for my number that night and I gave it to her and pressed
Her against the wall outside and kissed her.

IG

I rarely know who I am when I first start talking to you.
I have to slow myself down. I’m a newly
Disciplined poet. Sorry this is your shopping.
I don’t know who you are either.

I am afraid that if I am too much of you
Or of what you want me to be then I will freeze
Myself as something along the way
To being my new self, selves,

Tastes and habits and beautiful women. I remind myself
Of the first line and also not of the first line. I am not
Disintegrating, just integrating carefully. I want to eradicate
The things I see in you

Once found in me and it’s why I have to slow myself
Down, stuff like that: 26 substitutes, yeah.

Baby Changing Station

I stared straight ahead.
It made me feel like death.
The gym was then dead, an air
Of strop. The runners also stopped.

My being—once again—was then
Permeated by a load of snot

That I struggled to get shot of. What's
Worse is that I've mentioned it, sounding

Like a lunatic. Childish! I was!
Hence I stared straight ahead, the feeling
Like death doing a necessary job
Of releasing my own strops, stopping

Me from continuing to be a childish
Knob a little bit but not fully just yet.

Hatstand

I'm going to get it down and go away for weeks—right:
Think! All this concrete stuff around me,
Around us. The bozos in government and light
On… no—"gracing" the hatstand. He bought a hat. It didn't touch his ears.
I also bought plants and I looked so close to page
54. I showed you, didn't I? I was so close to feeling
Like it too. And when we walked—O when we *walked*—we appeared
To be doing it like the others. I was drafting. But then

It turned out that he'd been spending an average of 4 minutes
On Pornhub each day and he hated the hatstand. I told him
His hat was embarrassing. Everything
Felt completely false around me. I looked at everything.
I couldn't even write. All my work, efforts felt false.
Distracted by, focused on the memoir edits, fortunately. It's OK they told me to take all the time I need.

Curious Joints

For every stone thrown at a bird
There is someone far away pointing at it, saying, "How
Awful! Buy my memoir!" This person will obviously
Not have the ability to cast stones. *Gosh* no!

Why does the particularised story I am having to play out
Insist that I point and throw in this seemingly
Antagonistic way though? It makes me feel

So alone in my courageous efforts (no doubt) no doubt seeming
Angry and conservative, when really
I'm just trying to demonstrate that everything

That happens in the world involves every single one of us. Like, I feel I am both stone
And bird, and that you are also

Fifty percent terrible by your own lights. But fine; OK—*your* flaws
We're merely "ill-advised". Curious joints.

Regardless Though

I do not find it difficult to write at all. People
That say they do—implicitly implying they want praise
For constructing poems or any other kind of artwork—
Are ridiculous, in most cases. Fuck it: in all cases. The effort

It takes to clear the way in life
To be able to create the thing though: fair enough;
That might be very hard. Excruciating, in fact.
Though that effort was probably obligatory.

By that I mean that if they did not clear the way they would still
Be stuck where they were pre-work, pre-
Creation, and so in some way they would still feel deeply
Unhappy and so they would even potentially be dangerous. Not

That they wouldn't be this afterward still, only less so. They are still
Only doing the things that necessarily we should all be doing regardless though, morally-
speaking.

'Clipse

I'm at it again: it's loving
Everything but not, nasty

Ugly things the size
Of its head—hehe. Ouch! Omg!

Nasty ugly things saying
Things. But the

Cracks and
Creaks around our nature reserve

Deserve us dissonance
From the shadow of the moon

The moon! *Our* moon!

Short Term

I picture her in her 50s, hysterical over something her neighbour did, a pill organiser on the
kitchen table, an oft-told story in her throat about me.

Strikethroughing

Sitting still
Timelessly, the pens
Rework the dermises. I sicken myself

For a bit, then I'm not that bothered, not
Being a chapter no more

And all. Read what you like

Into it. Highlight and bold: fine! I'm
Written as little as possible (!) strike-
Throughing, more than anything; only

You don't see what I chuck
In the dying seconds.

Kumbayaed

We sat around the fire with our blankets,
Splints. Good because I had writer's arm. Kumbaya
Was sung and there was warmth
Shining on us. Implicitly, someone was coming: we'd stripped

So far before the blankets, splints—
So we were ready and it was due. The fire went out and we didn't
Know what to do. Brett said it was so obvious, what was
Coming after that last enjambment. "Just

Restart the fire," I said. But no one could. "Your
Break must be healed by now, Franny," he said. "Restart the fire."
"I have not moved
In years and I have healed to the floor, earth,

Wood and so I have been burnt," she said.
She then Kumbayaed more. Her singing was terrible. I'd always thought it but I'd never said anything to her. It was like that kind of thing wasn't allowed here; though what could I even mean by that? I'm incoherent. I even started saying to her one day, I started saying "Why don't you get up and try…" But I stopped myself. I secretly took my brace off at night, too. I left for a week once and I didn't explain myself and no one even seemed to notice. I don't really know why I came back.

Absolutely Essential

The weather is foul and no one is waiting for you.
After writing this I will revert back
To something else at some point and try not to make that concrete,
Then I will write to you again: the weather
Is foul and no one is waiting for you.
It is a glorious position to be in, each step
You take being completely your own, half
For someone else, no doubt—no doubt—perhaps
Someone you'll never even know.
You have to get up. You have to change the entire universe.
There is nothing else for it. Feel
The acceptance drip further in, your body rejecting it
Initially yes. But then get up again.
Just get up again
And do it one less time and you have truly changed the universe.
I *will* revert back into some wildly maladaptive behaviours
Temporarily at some point and you will know nothing about it: we give the world

What we want it to see and to be, and that makes it.
I may write about it
To you and then regret it and then get up again. We make the weather foul ourselves.
Every habit, niggle,
Pain and grievance can go if you choose to let it. The tears
Will come and you'll watch them
And watch them. You may scream, heave. You'll have done it one less time, taken
Two steps further this time barely without noticing. It'll feel
A miracle. You'll punch the air
For seconds and get up again
And again as there is no other alternative for changing everything, and it is absolutely essential,
And you'll do it more and more, effortlessly and silently.

Fancy

What's funny's your physiology changing as I air these fails: they read like
Flairly nonsense to you but they're rarely
Minus healing consequences at my own expense.
I expect

I've done both again disappearing.

Wonderful Prospect

She's treating me like a neurolinguistically programmed exercise, which would be
Fine! Only I have only seen between her thighs

Once. I licked it with my tongue. It wasn't
Wrong. It tasted nice. But the

Choreographed text messages she sends are slightly
Off. Why do I always seem to get these type of ones? Ones

I'm prone to trauma bond-
Ing with? Or is that all there is? In my experi-

Ence it seems that way. But I'll be OK; I don't
Mind the kind I find that seem to play

With me (only not in the right way) too much...
Yet! As she

May yet let me see between her thighs again, and that
Program is a wonderful prospect as it was one of the best.

Shrill, Languid, Handsome and Horrible

If you don't Shuggie Bain the pain I don't really want to know, OK? Thanks. Cretinous little toad; I've got
All these cousins to promote, you know? O you
Wouldn't know them, no—they're all
In the artistic game: creatives and journos and owners

Of boats and they float through it all…

Wait… is that something
You wrote? That
Story that juxta-
Poses the saying of "owt"
With my Uncle Billy's estate with the moat? Totally

Novel approach… *mate*! 'Ark at me, eh! Archi-
Medes?! That's not what I said. But you know who that is?!
You've surprised me; I thought I'd be
Dead before a peasant like you, knew
And would speak of an Ancient Greek.

But that probably says more about me—
Mummy! Meet my new friend: he's
Funny! I mean he's rather filthy and grew
Up on the dodgy
Side of the tracks where they talk

Like that—listen; say something! "Prick."
Fantastic, isn't it! It's like he's in prison.
Or slept with his cousin! "You mean
Like us?" Yes, mummy. But that's for
Eugenic breeding. Well that's what Bill said!

I'm Afraid I'm Not a Very Good Host (Old Sport)

Sometimes—specifically
When it's from East Egg—you smash

Yourself inside it and the S&P
500 falls. The lineage

Breaks and the walls around the castle
Can't take what pulled her: she's flung

In the stalls and gets blue
Murder from her family for taking a fool's

Chowder inside her. And how she did
Chowder! I'd never screamed louder!

She said she was proud of
Herself—to me, at least—for mixing

With such a common beast. I was fixing
My belt

To leave. I nodded and agreed
With her and gave her

My number—"Text me!"; but I never
Got it: wrong

Digits! Though I'd spread bet
Against it earlier. And now *I'm* rich!

A Hodgepodge of Characters

Everyone wanders in hats that don't fit, coats that must look expensive and not expensive. They care extremely and not at all – depends who's there. There are new magazines for it all daily and they walk as if they are being read each moment, saying nothing with endless essays, though, "concentrating on themselves, mindfully," queuing on Sunday mornings outside the most uncomfortable of places to eat before getting snacks within minutes of the shop closing at the end of the day, starved. Constant thoughts of all experiences being illustration-worthy. "Should I find their body so grotesque so quickly?" torn out. A hodgepodge of characters.

Both Away and Going

I want to tell you about the reel I have playing in my head of her getting in and out of the shower with another man's voice in the background, as I'd rather tell you in the hope you buy me a coffee, not a pity coffee, a well-worked coffee, because before you know it I'll be on my sixteenth short black: you'll then realise why I was giving it to you, the reel, working hard. The intimacy of the moment has, and is lasting for years longer than one expected, but it is only since I gave it to you – and you and you and you – that the caffeine cloud of the thing has soaked into everything, making life buoyant. I could buy these cafes now. And I've considered the baristas! But why do that when you can think before telling you about them, keeping the floats both away and going.

March Into the Ground

Just as the trees with the best light ever
Tie themselves to the clouds, the ancient

Dynasties more civilised
Than ours disappear from the library

I've gathered at home behind the shelf
With the faux-lamp, those books

No one knows about. I know I'm making the trees
Come back while I tell you too, but you're so

Pretty it's the reason we make
Those ancient, technologically-advanced

People's like the Perv-

But I'm not so smart anymore, the clouds
Attempting to undo themselves

From the leaves, seeds,
Glistenings more precisely

To advance into my room; only I only
Now appreciate their momentary

Acknowledgment before turning away
For a reluctant… now acceptable

March into the ground.

He Left

Put it this way: I… bought her a book, yeah? But I didn't give it to her for weeks, say: it didn't feel right. I was ready to take the book to the charity shop and delete her number, in fact. In fact so ready, I was, that I sat in the readiness as if it was going to happen – even, that it had happened. But I was also ready to call her. Bombard her with attention, affection, unwanted or otherwise. But I didn't do that either. Don't think about it; I did my other things – errands, ate, slept. One day I woke up and rang her and we've been married thirty years now. There was no book though, you must understand. Neither of us needed one. Yet there I was sitting in it: he left in a dream.

Analysis LIVE

After Wendy Cope

I owned a massive melon. I was having some kind of episode
As I really thought it was the melon that was temporarily
Lightening the load. Though
I figured out later that it was a combination

Of endorphins from my run, good
Sleep and the good seeing to I'd received
That morning that was making me feel like I still wanted to be here. Usually
I don't want to be here as you'll know from my other collections.

I took the melon
To class, and the boy
Nearest to my desk, picked it up
And fucked it through the window, smashing the window. He started apologising even
before it left his hand.

Lil Voice

I'd sooner cover myself in a technicolour dreamcoat and risk the plagiarism charge and stand a plinth in the morning in it for a few minutes, drafting the day, before sinking back down into current affairs than risk whatever else could be going on, because these affairs: Jesus – who'd sit in them?

Six weeks later it'll be what, a play? I might be having sex! You could be having sex and all you had to do was shiver a bit in a borrowed coat. A few whizzing past on the train'll look back; one might say, "D'ya see his coat, huh? Damn straight," and most the others will think nothing of that either. Where'll you be standing? A inch off the ground noticed by no one but the firmly rooted, half angry with you, though wanting the trick. They're usually the same people; and you know they hate loud jackets. What else you going to do though – feel like *that*? How you do *now*? I independently founded those scraps of fabric. I'm Wallace and

you're Darwin. I'm not changing it! OK maybe a couple of stitches when I get around to looking: I descend into affairs again! But can't you just *feel* that was weeks ago for me now? I don't even sense the cold now and I'm not sure I was. I'm beside myself and not. There wasn't even a damn *set* around me on those mornings when I had not even a vest – not even a floorboard, only creaks. Now I'm the stage, orchestra, theatre, god damn queue around the corner and ice cream vendor, because I'll still pitch in. I *am* the pitcher, smucks! I threw this one in only days after that hideous trench. And I'm the defence attorney too! And looka this suit! I'm edge of the beams.

Spin Button

There was the time I said it another way. It was totally to do with me it was embarrassing; I'm probably only really fully admitting to it now. I do make myself laugh. If I didn't have you to tell who knows how I'd navigate life. Though I'm not naive enough to *not* turn it into the times I used to visit the Harvester and play on the bandit: that's what *seems* to be going on momentarily. What happened there? There must be some significance, or something in you that's bringing it out of me. Maybe someone did something immoral as I walked past them in the bar. Bandit, toilet, bar. Bandit, toilet, bar. And before you say it, I know what I'm avoiding with you. But you've got to remember: right now, you represent the transient, though very real trends in our cultural zeitgeist (I *may* have overheard him saying this to his son. Their dinner had just arrived. It's like that man that arrived at that funeral that time from far away. I was young and everyone despised him because he'd left and done something he shouldn't have, though that turned out to just be him living his life. If you take the time to be really disciplined in some quiet sometime, and you scrap a wall during the sweet spot of that quiet – just listening for when to do it – then an answer can come). I believe it means I am not fearful of saying what I feel parts of me may need to say, it's more that I respect – thinly – that they cannot. There was this way of flicking your finger so nonchalantly down the spin button that was causally inconsequential to what you won, I mean. We did it anyway.

My Poorly Thinky Head

I blew out my matches—"I don't even wear one!"—and put
My head up: millions
Of daddies I became—these
Knees. Sore!
Pray for me.

Though obviously I hid behind a sign the police couldn't decipher: coward.
And I lay

My poorly thinky head
In their lap afterward, begging
For forgiveness.

OK fine I prayed there; they stroked

That head and "there there"ed, rolling
Their eyes
At each other, begging—

Silently—
For it to lift again.
For me to just be quiet.

This actually suited me fine.

Ignoring the Smoke

"Are you sure you want to do this? I'm capable of raping someone!" I was starting to do the outline of a stick figure on a piece of paper – in silence – in the library when millions of people simultaneously shouted this through the window at me. It was nuts! *Should I… should I even bother finishing it?* All I'd done was draw an index finger of the figure pointing down.

I finished the rest shoddily as I again walked to the next library, dropping the paper on the floor as I entered, ignoring the smoke of the last library burning to the ground. They were already at the window.

Call With Editor

"mixing acid wash and lemonade"
—Courtney Barnett, 'History Eraser'

I've just turned a corner.
OK great. So the panic attack subsid-
No, I mean I've literally just turned a corner. Outside the museum. Left at the museum, you said, didn't you?
O. Yes. That's right. But what about the panic-
I disappeared.
What?
Sorry. I misspoke. *It* disappeared.
How… You rang me because you were having a panic attack – about… *it*… again. How can it just disappear?
Because that's what happens. I don't know. Does it matter? What's got into you?
You have! Listen, you were just screaming down the phone at me – like, just before you passed the museum, I assume – about the time you were having that psychotic episode and she fo-
What?! I didn't say that. I'd even probably enjoy that! You sure it was me?

Hold On

They gathered us in the mess. "The governor is dead," they said. Silence. Then I let out the loudest burp the world had ever heard. My feet started tapping. I got up and started tap dancing on my chair. "I'm no longer his!" I shouted. I'd never tap danced before. Never knew how. Another officer floated to the ceiling. "I'm free!" He'd soiled himself – didn't care.

The Village Fête

God turns it into synonyms, kinks
In the cloth tricks
Of the tongue—all sorts. Owt
Else? I forgot.

O stop it: he'll be gone soon!

Bombus Hypnorum

My twins Hansel and Gretel return home
From university
Preferring to defer: “The tree
Bumblebee of the village
Be called “Bombus Hypnorum” there, mum—fuck ‘um!” They giggle
Back into the forest.

Irony!

Who’s to say why you quest-
Ion this and nothing else gets done!!! Shades
Of someone coming through
That I dun wid. O no o no—
That I am done with.

I don’t know anything
About this but something
So badly happened that you think
“Irony!” at the break
At the beginning of this stanza.

You Were Waiting for the Toast to Pop Up

Where is the pretension? What I’m asking
Is where
Is the pretension?

It’s full blown in my sternum
Now, as it rhymed. I’m so many things—

Forgive me. And what have *they* done
This time?

Revision

“I guess what I was trying to do was resolve something from being born. Not in an antinatalist or nihilistic kind of way. I mean literally from my birth, as I think it was bad, problematic in some way—the way I came out. I never asked but I get that impression. And it makes sense with how I’ve operated since—trying to save, fix, heal women, both with physical intimacy and my emotional integrity, as I have a lot of it. But because of the nature of the birth, I feel I have been trying to do this with women that it is not possible to heal. If they need healing at all, that is—but I can’t imagine that not being the case. I’ve considered this a lot. Where this leaves me going forward I’m not sure. I don’t act from this compulsion now, which means there is a gap in my purpose, almost. Like I am just staring at death now that nothing else is required of me—now that I have resolved my own birth, somewhat, and developed the knowledge that that is what I was doing. I’ve figured it mostly, but it is hard to figure definitively *in abstracto*, because by my own existence’s very nature, there is nothing else to tie the awareness of the knowledge onto. Perhaps I am “resolved” in the sense that the void is now correct then, and that’s it. At least I know not what to do now though.”

—

From ChatGPT

“I think what I’ve been trying to do, at least subconsciously, is resolve something connected to my birth—not in an antinatalist or nihilistic sense, but something literal about the way I was born. I’ve always had the impression that it was bad or problematic somehow, though I never asked outright. It feels like it shaped me. It makes sense when I look at how I’ve operated since: this compulsion to save, fix, or heal women. I’ve done this through physical intimacy and by offering emotional integrity—something I think I have a lot of.

But because of whatever happened at my birth, I think I’ve been drawn to women who can’t actually be ‘healed’—if they even needed healing at all. Still, I can’t imagine them not needing something; it’s how I’ve framed things for so long. I’ve thought about this deeply, and now that I’m aware of it, I don’t act from that compulsion anymore.

That shift leaves a kind of emptiness, though—a gap in my sense of purpose. It’s like I’m now just facing death, untethered, because nothing else feels required of me. In some ways, I think I’ve resolved what needed resolving about my birth—or at least, I’ve developed the knowledge that this is what I’ve been doing all along. But it’s hard to fully make sense of it because there’s nothing concrete to anchor this awareness to.

Maybe this emptiness—the void—is the right outcome. Maybe it’s what resolution looks like.”

<u>Mirror Neurons</u>

To see a World out the window
In the eyes of another which… stimulated
The mirror neurons in you both—that’s right—
As you both felt it and knew there was potential: yeah.

But you’re too grown now. The poem
Of what you could have been
Went past this morning too, beneath
The poem of your real feelings

Beneath the poem of the poem that you did write, another
Another life, you think. The consistency
Isn’t important it is the *feeling*; it’s why
You cannot can’t waste your life

On people with less of an experience
Than the poet of yourself. The scientist
Of yourself inside you smashes a test tube in the la-bo-ra-tory
Into loads of pieces of Artist’s Jealousy: yeah——

Beneath
The poem of these glimmers
Is another of being
Inside her too but she didn’t understand either: she’ll circle back around, you swear.

A Banana Very Occasionally

The clown ran past, that's what,
And stopped. I'm still relieved.
"Look—we both know what's under here," he said
Pointing at his face. "And you should be glad

I got to you before the rest. It's better this way!"
I was 6. You could be 35
And she could be 14 and it about
To happen but then you remember

The clown and go home and wait: you never
Liked her when you first married
Anyway and you just watch
Your diet change.

Comma-ed Breaths

It comes out how it comes out, only now
I take a little bit more control, adding commas
For your sake. When it's schizophrenic you see

Yourself and think it's me—I know;
But I'm quiet holding the pen
Barely at all as the centre guides me: my belly;
The reader. I really really *really* (comma-ed breaths

Lasted long didn't they) would like to not be pulled by these different urges
(Perhaps I'm not?) as this could be my real voice
Coming through plagued by brackets. No one
Talks like a poet. They quite simply don't!
They never sound how they sound

On the page so what the fuck
Is your problem? he says, watching the hand ~~tease feed~~ eat up space.

I Went on an Adventure!

"Go back to a safe place
From your childhood
And write about it. You can then
Remember and return to that place
Whenever you want to create." The facilitator

Is begging me to remake
The *Outlaws of the Marsh* with a hobbit's
Journey involved *A Novel About Human*
Density and *War and Peace* all in one go by the sounds of it several

Languages included too as I sever—thinking gone: all the characters come; good

Luck with the cycle home, son!———forever

And ever and ever and ever I shall draft

Alone in my fantasy home, because in class
I'd never get anything done.

We'll Need Each Other's Help

We know what was pretending to be there
Before was not really there before it makes it
Easy from here to speak I'm guessing you are
Not here yet in both ways than none. The meditations

Are beautiful but only a little bit.
The branches appear to be in front of the grimy wall, windows
Inside them to inside
Where the light goes off

Only we adjust and then we see something else
Simply the best thing if you're at the angle
To then see further branches and then a new
Yep here and here

Yep I know I could spread it over the rest,
Only we'll need each other's help.

Lucy

Life stopped at six. She now only exists
As a container for all the crime she entertains, the sins
She witnesses justified inside her by the same
Child that needed a lie to survive——it

Shouldn't be shared so
Crassly like this though, apparently: why don't we
Feign we haven't seen her instead just like her
Filler at six did: "She'll only float through," bystanders say,

"The rest of her life anyway, pulling wool more
And more over herself and every fool until they're

Drooling too due to all her mind games." Her pain
Then hits at 56-ish and there'll be fits and psycho-
Sis at best before all that's left at her death are cool
Make-believe stories of Lucy, the local wild floozy.

Shut Up and Drive

"Is that a car?" No one was around;
I didn't have time to think. I'd been talking to the trees.
"Someone should really become conscious
Of the confides of that car and prise it
Open slightly—no song or dance
Or doughnuts or phallic acceleration

About it; so I couldn't do it!—making themselves
Sound silly, of course. But then the off-
Spring of the critics could pile
Into the back of it ("really?") and do new tricks whilst wondering what that
Cock with the… car, was it?… was going on about." By this

Time I'd already studied the forest for years: I blagged
New peers to appear in the ~~blur~~- advert shifting
Gears, fake fronds falling all around, the ground still sno- Exactly.

So You Could Blame Them

You come to me wanting to have a conversation
I do not need to have anymore. That's what literary

Criticism and essays
Or shrinks or bars

Are for, or your own poems or pillow
Princesses you need to just ask

Nicely to face it: it's whatever you bring
To the lecture on the current climate

We are all making shamelessly in
Shame that it's anybody's

Guess what you'll feel, especially once you know
You've written the thing for no other reason

Than a means of ignoring the note she just slid
Over in your own handwriting so you could blame them.

I Give Them Away

I pack my bookshelves full of myth, study them,
Then feel it: I give them away.
Big pharma's miffed.

I've no idea where I go from here: I build

A bridge: "Grab what you
Can and don't come back! No it's purposely
Rickety why are you taking photos of it—

It's a bridge! Don't let them cross it!"
Beneath

They fish with my books. Now

They say it's not the same
River or man

But I know differently on this
Island, the ropes
Severed but sirens! On *my* island?!

I thought they lived in rivers. I've been duped! Times
Change. The siren

Goes off they lock the
Gates I can't escape! They drug us.

We're safe.

Don't Think of a White Whale

Imagine *everything* you do
Publicly viewable on one canvas
As shared by you being compared
To this model of diagnosable behaviour, how now

Brown boo, one point to me none
For you, I'm afraid, Ish.
To me to...

No thanks. There's no such thing as bad weather only
Not talking about it. Perhaps it's just enigmatic! It was only

A large fish that swallowed Jonah, actually,
Before he carried on making things up: by Joe! The whale

Then spon-
Taneously combusted during tran-
Sport; and

According to scholars, no human could realistically survive for three days inside a fish.

Externalising Absence

All the things I am not? Could easily
Become this poem

Which I then may resent and
Struggle to fulfil but then I created

The fucking thing: I wrote
The couplets on different occasions

I wouldn't understand. Why am I so
Hung up on this we were

Fucking and my eyes rolled into the back of my head
From the

I cannot finish this

Piece without you getting

Overly excited
God control yourself—embarrassing.

My God They Could

No—someone has definitely moved my mirror,
As I have been consistently looking in it
Consistently since I kicked them out
And changed my number, as they were the problem, only now
It's moved, and I would not put it past them
To have snuck in and moved it just to get on my wick: the words I'm repeating! I'm in the middle

Of a major redrafting of a draft
I've been working on—it's a personal project—and I
Need the mirror as it's been
Fucking me right off recently by producing
Increasing—and fascinating—levels of irritability and paranoi-

Ignore me it was right under my nose.

And they were an excellent cook. And my god they could fuck. I'm learning all the time.

Mount Vesuvius

Of course, I also used to date Vesuvia, the Pisa Papyrology team's secretary. Like an attractive
Silicate mineral, she was born
Next to the mount, and so she insisted
On sticking her head back in the lava
Now and then to demonstrate the pain. She'd then
Tell everyone about it in a rage
Before forgetting before doing it again.

She had her own
Dead scrolls stuffed away and I read
One once and got her kicked
Off the team for our sakes. In fact I left
That team too: I returned to my studies instead, having acknowledged
The seriousness of this work. She's
Now a tourist attraction as she dips in and out.

Carbonisation

"All this paper stuff I've
Made up to plug the
History of my real anatomy? Woah!
I didn't see that coming! Nor you

Either, any time soon at this rate. You don't make characters like me
With agency, usually, do you?" she said,

Me pumping away behind her like a Herculaneum
Papyri, when really, I wanted to smother

Us both in lava. Why do I insist on
Reading lost scrolls when

Unravelling risks destroying them? It's why I quit as
The lead papyrologist's official poet—"Then I must quit too!" And so we

Ran off together to explode tuff
Ash deposits—finally—all over the knowledge of whatever it once was.

Early Find From Fall

Joshua, 8: 7x7=49
Teacher (apparently): Nice one. Well done!

J: Half of us are gods.
T: What?
J: Half of us are gods and the other half will be.

Who told you that?
Me.
But, why did you think that?
Me.
But is it part of your times tables?
Maybe, sir. I just like the words!

No. Pack it in. You're too young for a voice like that.
But not for 7x7 :(

No Cap

What you cooking—pain
And no fucking? Lovely!
Can I have some? It's what the
Rest are doing? Sure! But your-

S sounds different, a slight
Improvement on these nothings
In the snow: you know we
Know when it's a fantasy

Of what you want to be—
Or were; the body
Keeping score and blur-
Ring thoughts out the mouth to make the match

Drawn. Then it's a new fixture.
Kitchen! Then back around to cook- fucking: you're lucky!

Thereof One Must

It's here again! You
On the street on that
Surfboard, no leash
Yet more lessons and agents
And red dresses can come
As they wish: you've drawn
This wave and know every
Splash of which one can speak.

On Narcissism (Deleted the Emails Now)

"He gon' give it to ya"
—DMX, 'X Gon' Give It To Ya'

After receiving two emails, separating them with an asterisk, and adding some line breaks

I suspect you've ditched this account, or this will just
end up in a spam folder or summut, but I'll try anyway..

I'm gonna be moving back to [redacted] permanently
soon(ish), late June or mid July, and wondered
whether you might want to have a farewell pint (if you're still in Bristol)?

I understand you might absolutely hate the idea, which is totally
fair enough.

Just came across all this
sweet loot, and couldn't not ask!

[Editor's note: "sweet loot" refers to a photo attached to the first email, showing "notes, letters, poems, stories, drawings, quotes…" created by this editor. These were given to the author by this editor during their relationship. The next section (email) provides additional context.]

*

Also, I know you feel the way I treated you
led you to have a psychotic breakdown, but m8…

You left me unable
to settle for any relationship
ever again – the love in all of these notes, letters, poems,
stories, drawings, quotes… no one
has/will ever
bloody come close!

(I mean this in a very
unserious way, whilst simultaneously suspecting
it's not entirely untrue.)

[Further editor's note: To confirm, the editor has not altered the author's (emailer's) original

words, grammar, punctuation, or structure in this poem – he has only added line breaks to the paragraphs (stanzas) to make the content more lyrical, and so palatable for himself.]

Crystal

I don't want to understand today:
It was your dad. It wasn't me.

Nothing Like I Imagined

The intricacies of this poetry film I am pulling apart
Psychoanalytically as the scenes
Of light from the project-
Or hit shine bright brief-
Ly falling down the screen: I'm standing
Below trying to catch themes like toast crumbs, when really,

I could have let it go: we were young,
It swept on the floor. We always dove
Back under the covers anyway some surreal
Picture it was. We missed lectures;
Would we have benefitted? We'd sit I'd

Pester—rightly—to stick our worst bits together—
"The trick!"—so we'd never
Ever have to come back here: extortionate prices now.

Moving House

What if we labelled the boxes at random
Placing owt in any old thing
Dragging it to the new lawn

Of our forever home before we go
Boozing, never unpacking, the rats
Getting it, the house gone

Bulldozed when we return,
It looked abandoned and the rubbles great
How it is—really changes

The feel of the whole street, in fact.
Go bac- Wouldn't dream of it; and if
So, who's to say? Not us, no way

You know it sometimes slips through, those
Lies about you lighting up the whole room.

Hope

Sometimes you'll sense a sudden strand through the no-
No poetry that used to last for a millennia's

Adolescence, only now you know to
Eat. Then who knows

—Confused in between?—
Maybe you'll break

Through again and get up tomorrow—on time—
To slither into the next ray that plays
On the cringe of your cheek
Without explanation: no one

Will ever fathom fully what was left
Behind as you *did*
Make the kitchen and ate that
Snack whilst laying new slabs.

Hmm. Try Again Tomorrow

My girlfriend took me to the doctors
To get me back on the sertraline, which was
Fine because mother
Had always said I was weird. O he was

Silent in the corner
With the remote control trying to find
The right channel. I've found it
Now and it's not

This story O I love
Reruns and he helped me with my paper round, by the way: they never fucking did, did they.
She's always a right bitch.

I Might

You'll have to bear with me.

[Door is slammed shut and locked.]

I'm so sorry about that. Thank you coming, and waiting. And coming in here with me too! For
a while I've been mean to tel-

[Door opens.] You think you could get away with-

[Door is slammed shut again and two lock sounds can be heard this time.]

I definitely locked it first time, didn't I? Did you hear me lock it? I'm losing it, I'm sure. But I'm
sure it's...

[Door handle is shook.]

...Yes it's definitely locked double locked this time.

They didn't want me to come in here—*us* to come in here. And you have to remember that
the world is bare—not here—though I was going to…

[Door handle is shook.]

How empty can it be
Really? Can he remain outside? I am a free
Woman—a woman's spirit
In this body and I plan to use it.

O Now What

I cry so many times a day but stand up immediately afterward.
I grab my pen and pad and we don't
Journal but plan
What's next on the path to find the criers, the sniffling
Little dreamboats that they are, gaining paddles. I could snap
You in two with a stare and hug a bear; I care
How I sound for those inside
Alone the dissonance
Produced here is secondary and heavenly: they aren't back
Down and to the right in pentameter instead they want odd
Steps
That let us swing side to side
At best out the ground nooseless, though great
With knots. No they won't explain the knots, as you can probably tell.

*

Not sure about that now: I cry
'Cause I'm an animal; the logic's
Ineffable to bring it all together
Still—quiet. Peacefully, like.

I tap keys to bring memo-
Ries in prints you can't see: you only get
Me. Forget it. I'm alone
Beneath pain stitching blind needle-

Sslychizophrenically. I ball and float
High topsy-turv-
Ily all day. I do! (No really—I do; even if
They didn't.) I'm not

Kidding I'm living sui-
Cidal one minute then tidal
Waving the next best
Thing for it, this generis

Split for you to see me work
Through two places
At once berserk merking
Merfolk that try enter my word surf, these

Worthless Janus-faced poet berks
Caked in cliché-say while I just
Don't face the pain so I can stay
Barely playing for the rest of my

Days leaving doorways and blue
Monday's boring old order peeved: some day I'll
Work out how it feels (maybe) but for now I remain
Flawless with broken

Seams and seals (ouchy*) helping; *clutching
At times, mind.

Some Bounce

In the clouds with karma under my belt:
This rainfall. Downpour. The higher
We get the harder
They fall a little higher? The spiral

In time and space still forgets.
Not that I'm suggesting it's coiled! Just
Controlled: playing in static
Is fantastic. What *is* old? We're here

Forever together whether
We see the return or not; I forgot
To mention so it doesn't
Matter is formulated from what

Fog is fog is fog, the spring
Gone as well as autumn leaves.

"Civilisation" and Disscontent

The runaway century's shade
Became shadows we don't know how to say

'Round our way: I'm voting
'Um in again—fuck it; wotul you care

About me? Probably hung up on the fucking spellin'.
Academically

Speaking I'm thinking you ain't
Gonna understand me anyway

"Up there", regardless of what I say—
How: even high brow in wrong tongue

Remains unpalatable for a bigoted
Mong. O fuck off—you scoff

At anything that ain't lofty
Wankery that does nothing

But echo conceptually
To itself in faux light spitefully, despite

It casting dark ticks later
In boxes that shock scarily thick idiots

With all the books, apparently: hater?
You've found your mirror.

IYKYK

Everyone that came for tea got slaughtered as soon as they walked out the door—
Now look what you've done!

O. You are. Always.

Every Time You Wince at His Words a Child Is Raped (No, He Doesn't Have Friends—Why'd You Ask?)

Oh dear. Poor dear.
If you could just

Present it all a bit more tidily
For us, that'd be great—OK,

Dear? Wait—what
Do you mean you've

Voted for him you stupid
Vile ignorant piece of scum

Shit. Just die.
Your poetry is reductive.

No wonder we don't listen.

Island, City, Poem

The shadows are looking odd.
What! I'm going with them!
This is *yellow* snow?! Fair.

And I didn't necessarily agree
With the original frost anyway, nor
The multiple logs
Used before. If a car? Whatever

Works to get us there—only
Remember

It then melts for the next cold
Blank stare

Back.

Pulling Teeth

To be so real I must have been
Very fake, the tooth
Fairy giving me grief. Santa
Too—it's always the same:

Gone by morning. Fuck sake!
The fantasy
Carries me still——lies; I'm deep
Inside while child's

Play provides these
Poetry pills that help me sleep. This
Body, I mean: I float

Besides in a dream watch-
Ing botched
Lines that coulda been "butchered", only that didn't rhyme.

Haha I Remember Her Now

I sat too comfortably—my
Housemate's father moved in, and I'm
Manoeuvred accordingly: she

Bravely cultivates
Her evolving agency through me, believing
It really is all about me (can't relate); while I

Reap no serious reward
That usually comes from being a daddy. And I'm
Bored of being a stand-in. Can't

Stand it! But I'm a boy
Who knows how to handle this and
Hand it back to her

So she believes it's her ploy. Only this still leaves me unable
To nick her milk anymore.

Purple Martin

Up out the chop suey! Now there's only
Steak left and less

Debating our brain states. What the fuck are you all going on about still? Forget it!

It tastes

Disgusting and it's nauseatingly
Repetitive watching you mirror

Each other to death in that massive pot
You love stirring around

And around and around and around
In—until it comes back again, you know? Hard

To chew but why's it matter
Once swallowed?

*

Noodles! That was it!
Leaving the noodle pot! Rebranding

Oneself as a migratory bird
Above the lid, the bands

Left banging the steel
Inside creating echoes

Of your old notes, warning
How you've lost yours

Yet you freely rent.

A Thing for Restaurants

Obviously I couldn't—wouldn't—but if I was to
Put together a menu
For a Michelin-starred restaurant, I'd
Start it with a starter
So terribly unsatisfactory a
Carcass of a dog I'd skinned
Alive, say—some dodgy
Garnish—so as to stop
The dodgy bloggers from reading
The rest of menu. This would make them
Leave the restaurant, hopefully, meaning they'd miss
The party after desserts where we'd resur-
Rect the hound (he wasn't ordered!) while also
Unveiling a statue to its peel. These bloggers—
Bless them—would then later
Pose for pictures with the figure
While slating the dog's spirit that made it
Long after he's cooked.

Living With Someone

I find myself in a room now decorated perfectly—magnolia walls;
Barely stuff: minimalist—so I am about to get
Lazy and touch up
The corners without looking I'll be coming
Inside one again soon, I'm sure—a mansion
Packed a gated
Community a universe a
Novel. I just can't sit still.

*

Mere hours
This time, housemate. I realise I slipped
A note under your door
Without thinking
And will again. I was restless
And idle—I am again: ignore
My notes while I'm like this. They'll come
At the same rate—sure. No I can't
Say which to ignore! Do I have to do *everything*?
This is a *shared*
Cleaning rota! Decorating then!
What do you mean you *feel*—there's nothing
Here! A corner! A brush!
But why the fuck should it end? I live
Like this; you're free
To leave.

Why Is Everything Not Created for You?

"Cloud cloud cloud cloud cloud cloud cloud cloud cloud cloud cloud cloud cloud cloud
cloud…
How many is that? It's sooooo difficult to say, you know.
Let alone type! But you just watch me.

And how dare you not be sun!!!"

Rosetta, Stoned

"I'm chaotic and manipulative!" Well that's certainly no longer tongue!
The beginning, too, is missing.

Do They Point Out the Potential Inconsistency of Them Having "Feathers"? You Bet

Every time! On the floor
Of the pet store they behave like stars, the pets
I pick, strutting and
Bucking and a lot of squawking
And acting up like they've got something to offer, you know—
Like they could be entertaining? Then you get
Them home and they just lie there

Curled up, letting out weird
Little squeaks now and then. Until a visitor comes: the faux
Squawking starts again! But when *I*
Want to play pet shop
In *my* cage? They turn away
From their feathers in disgust, crawling back
To the “Heyyyyy!”s

Anna Karenina Principle

So yeah obviously the poem could fuck up
In any number of ways, including
Voice, which often dictates
Its own domestication
And/or deficiency. But anyway every so often the failures
Psychosis-by-one-thousand-cuts
So much the only thing one can do
Is leave the unhappy family, all talk of it,
All sense of the antiquity it makes
And is still heard while the resulting
Poem makes tracks of its *own*
Deficiency, though adaption too into some kind of new
Family. A whole new voice may be discovered, for instance,
Which’ll not sound familiar.

Let Off

I write my best stories
About you when I won’t
Look above the sink: your past—
So easy! This dissonance
Appealing, always—the tales
Never boring. The shame
That I’m ignoring sprayed your way.

And then “Narcissist!”, they say! Yet I
Can't help but look away
And play in this unfettered ink, my attitudinal
Syntax stinking—fair; but I don’t
Care as I loop back care-
Fully, actually, into how you’ve had it so easy.

A Razor-Sharp Manifesto of Defiance

“I spaz in other dimensions”
—JPEGMAFIA, ‘SIN MIEDO’

It’s a shame this shame gave me excellent
Lexical semantics, yet no one understands this, believing
Them basic slurred man ticks, heaved out
Spastic mouth tricks wreaking havoc: if only

You could just undo him, the pillock—the appalling

Sprawling boy with the gall
To impress y'all still with his sprayed
Out quatrains fall-

Ing into each other, another
Case of a raped headcase
You just can't face, underesti-
Mated by those sedated

Suffers of "I'll never be
Good enough!": he called
That noise's bluff, uncuffed
Himself from that guff and out came… this stuff. Give up.

Another Changing Room

"Why are you sharing such dro-"—another one
Interrupting me again—"dross, at times?"

It would probably sound right
To say his name was Ross? I don't know why—

I hadn't met him before! "Because
It helps me. What else do you want me to say?"

Good question, I think as we change
Place

Again: Is it
Maybe… wait—to get rid of me? "Exactly!"

Barb

As plain as can be: it is extremely
Difficult to find your path (plus your chalk
Outline on it, unfortunately: you'll soon get over that) amongst the trees
And cows and sheep
In the fields all around. The fences. Barbed
Wire. Scarecrows. Even weirder
Pagan symbolism, other voices

Wincing at yours. Fuck um.
Ignore them ignore them ignore them. It may
Only stay as a forest whilst they all moo—
Baa. You'll be following
Your nose out the so-called snow though, while they'll be
Revering your footprints left behind
How you don't need once you're gone.

Triptych

More Mothers on Buses Bringing Sexy Back

“Jake—when we get home

I am going to smother you.” “What does that mean?”

“That it will be on

Like Donkey Kong.”

*

More Mothers on Planes Bringing Sexy Back

“Jake—look at that beautiful little girl

Sitting over there. Why couldn’t you

Have been a girl?”

*

More Fathers in Armchairs Bringing Sexy Back

All the Time

“In a rush this weekday morning”
—Billy Collins, ‘No Time’

“Maybe she knew not to let him out,” she replied, the mirror,
Across from me. He had no friends but I hadn’t
Thought of that angle before; as I shave

Myself: I’ve plans
To head out! So I swallow
Him back down again.

I’m Skating

I’m skating with these shadows, shining
My plight… light
How I want: I block the ice how
I need to stop the iceberg sub-

Merging me with what I need not know now, please: I rush
Away and stay in here
Simultaneously in these reeds, playing point-
Lessly from six kid’s seats, gear-

Listly, in fact, letting the ID
Of my idiot rule me, the 90-
Percent dictating my pen. And so I allow them

On the rink now and then, sounding
Like a dick with no single

Second wasted, actually: my 6 year old finds it funny, at least (and me).

Man in the Garden

The gatekeepers
To the garden maze pass by
My way and look in my window, my free plants
All on display, some of ‘um

Pathetic, granted. Many are
Exquisite though, no? I may say so
Myself. Fuck it—I just have.
And I reckon they like them

Too, mostly—quietly: all
Sneak by alone, lonely. Though if only
They’d tell me! But the show

They pose in don’t allow
My flows in. *Flowers*, I mean: “His stems
Are obscene!” they feign… Sorry! Smile? Fine: *scream*.

Scales

I’m edging on these waves now deep breaths
Cool face. I never used to last this long no one
Else on the other end pretending to enjoy it, still
My fault but I’m good for something:

Get in the sea. I swim
Picking at seaweed around me sucker
Fish cleaning my soul, concealer
Ink, Mariana Trench and what not:

Deep as fuck. To be pacific I like
Acting odd and thick to keep perverted bigots away from me.
I doggy paddle in salt as drudgery
Fogs my goggles on the surface with colleagues; while I’m too

Far out really—never coming back—rafts
And these riffs rifting space
Safely between me and the
Riff raff sticklebacks: they’ve no scales like these!

The Suss Days Again

On days like these, when I see
People frown, I blame
Myself, like I haven’t put out: what’s all

That about? It’s appalling
To shout
On such topics; and boring

To hear it come out
My mouth, again,
Like I cannot drop it: I spin

The same yarn like my brain's
A clew farm! Though clueless,
I am, as to why? Because

They're giving me the eye! I swear! And
I live in a pig sty! And don't care.

More Characters 4U

They dump
It on me I dump
It on you, characters
I've no clue

About and I'm out
On the street, alone,
Again with my
Pen. Let's go! S'OK—

You've nowt
Wrong done: blame
This one
Too.

Wrong Stations (Still Made It to The Gym Though B))

I am full of shame and I am absolutely
Better than everyone else. Some of those
Performances. I have never wanted to exist
Deep down, I just forget that sometimes.

I should play on the motorway. I'm an evil
Little boy. No way can he fuck:
Look what he's wearing. I'm perverted.
If only she tried a little harder she'd get

Me. Good idea—I walk the tracks, one leg
On each rail: something visual. I diverge and give
No fucks—they deserve it. I don't deserve

This ballast. Pathetic sleepers. What do *two* birds mean? What d'you mean
Splitting? It hardly consistently
Represents that. I sometimes wash and wash and wash.

You Still Think It's Me Haha

I expose all my breakthroughs in these poems, auto-
Writing myself in future, shock horror

When I read them back months later
Realising what I have given you, gritting

My lines into all my exes
Were right. Good job he writes
Though else who would I target? O sorry not
Him: he's on an island

Somewhere with some twenty-something.
He doesn't write. Doesn't need to. I am

On about this one here
Giving himself away so obliviously
Through my voice. To think we were friends
Once. No I wouldn't say I'm a… fan. Yet here I am.

Slinky

I got home from work to find the slinky going up the stairs. I'd had the kind of day at work that wa-

I'd had a day at work. I was changing.

Before I knew it, I was recording the slinky. This was happening more and more: I had hundreds of videos on my phone of everyday occurrences, then the slinky. I was also mentioning work less. I was changing. The slinky stopped and hovered mid-step near the top. I stopped my video and put my phone away and it carried on, only it never made the top. Not that it stopped climbing.

I never went back.

You Eating Crisps Too—My God

You'd sit on the sofa
For hours playing The Sims. You'd remove
Your glasses and stretch and yawn

Like a painting. I believe the universe was made for your teeth.
I sometimes
Feel forgetful now. It's wonderful.

Post 'Script

Schizophrenic avatar
Other bodies counting
I'm floating up a mountain
Dunno I can't remember
Dunno I feel better

Shelf Stacker

You'll soon know the ones to ignore though. It won't
Be difficult but it will be heartbreaking, especially
Considering you'll still be stacking for them
While they complain as you keep them outta confectionary regardless. Yes it'll be early days for them too.

It is up to
You you're on a zero hour
Contract and the better
You stack during that time the more likely they are to continue
Coming back or deciding this whole shopping business
Is a mere means fo-
For lining our stomachs: that's right!
No need it sounded
Alright and you were just doing
Your practice stack anyway so you've got the jo- O but we've closed this store now soz.

Walking Around

Wow! When did the sanatorium
Get so big!
Thank for globalisation. I hope
The coffee's cheaper afterward!

I, of course, have again locked myself in a cupboard.

These greasy spoons
Now disgust me. I want more
Picket fences, only a bit
Off kilter. A hat
Just resting.

Fine fine the cupboard.

Against the Pane

I drew the blinds
Which produced quite the headache

Along with the urge to draw so many superfluous things. The needless additional tools I got hold of. It was criminal. I definitely should not have been able to get them. Nuts. I then

Drew a window, the sun, its even
Rays coming in at me.

Fuck they were bursting in
I mean, evenly. And the people

Out there: I couldn't see them.
It was like I couldn't care less. Was there

A glare? I couldn't work out
How to verify the science: shadow?

There were shadows
Against the pane that they could

See and they would be extremely

Annoyed, I gathered

As I asked the servant to just
Put a blackout sheet up any old how.

*

“Ash, you twat—what you doing in there?
You’ll ruin it!” O I let *them* in though—

A very secretive door.
O it very is.

Short, Sharp, Shock

Beat me with a textbook, feed me
A thesaurus. The theories

Are keeping you from us. Who?
Whatever you’re scared of! Lines

You grid to ignore us, projecting
Synapses onto “prejudice”, inverted

Reflections thinking them wise—hilarious: the insights
You provide

Of yourselves, unawares, linguistic
Spells that don't help, care-

Less fuss over lower intelligence, looking
Down from ivory tower stunts: cunts—not

Once have you looked at the lens
That’s holding the pen, that repeats

It again, not for
“You”, but for “them”.

I Don’t Have to Talk to Them Anymore

It’s anti-realism and walking besides you
Or all that pain and moving the pen
Yourself and getting anything
Done and “busy” being removed
From your vocabulary
And knowing your capacities
And feeling the dislike and being
One all at the same time: I’m staying

On that first line, I’m afraid
Always, furious
At anti-realism being used, because I have this friend who once dated a philosopher.

Well it was actually his ex. He served her lunch: fine. Anyway he said
That *she'd* once had negative thoughts
About that particular poet, actually. Exactly! We never can tell, can we.

On Toast

I judge at breakfast before spending 10,000 hours in their shoes involuntarily now. I'm glad I
notice else I'd just stay judgemental at breakfast, only it does come with baggage,
baggage you can't pass on unless you learn *the* trick in the following hour—the
10,001st hour. All it takes is one pillock at breakfast to stay at breakfast though—
looking ridiculous, I might add—for us to-
Exactly.

A Cul-De-Sac in Fishponds

And as you fuck your way out of it
Whilst telling the masses
How you are "healing", there is
A chance you'll be repeating: and as you fuck your way…
On the path

Coincidentally is a snail, half
Peeping out of its shell. You can't
Teach it a thing: you lie—
Provide airbag stories: "And sleep

In if you need to. Have the cake!"
For all their sakes then: "We can't
Go over it. We can't go under it.

Oh no! We've got to go through it!" "Aha! I know
That bit! Did I… read it *all* as a kid?!"

Barryless

Them steadily undoing their family's snobbery haha
In verse (I cannot be fucked) before
They get to the pain
And odd, odd practices

They have in mind; and you know
It annoys them like this: this is
Another necessary eraser too. Only I am saying it is an eraser!!! not
Ontology or lesson (Barry I have never watched

Someone with as little integrity as you). I am being
Forgotten and taking so many losers'
Traits with me, leaving behind Barry

Barryless: the names may all be zeros
And ones by the time it's
A steady grey no one bothers drawing on.

Yeah Right!

You stand on this plinth and cry paper. You pick
Some up arbitrarily
You feel, and pin them
To the mirror and scribble autofiction
Think it's tracing, moody
At how it's worn. The unstraight
Pins harm the frame but your artistic
Friend from the course likes

It so you keep it and there's
Now a new story you've written—not sure
Where it came from. Pinch
Things from your surroundings. Ezra:
Yeah. You do not see yourself
In it too much anymore.

When No One Is Around You

You continue to nurse yourself as you inch toward a semblance of humanity
To make the hugs less painful.

Born as a millennia-old sponge, you squeeze
Drops of oesophageal acid, nursery rhyme,
War cry
From your hair strand by strand, ensuring
You keep more spray at bay
On the log you cling to in salty seas, having chosen
Floating for reasons long forgotten: drowning
Is selfish, they said? And all the stars

Don't work for your course alone. Though the ever-tentative mappings
Of "astronomers"
Are less and less conspiratorial, finally: it's

All a bit silly, but if you wait long enough

Someone will point and say your name.

SGs

The splintered goats—massive horns—swing
Between Berkeley and Kant. You get a sense
Of an incest story by the cover
Eventually (you'll be calmed
In your rhythm by this time, straight meaning,
Still others leaning over) and you'll look up
In the library. And O especially the university ones!
And you'll suddenly be hungry
Or want an argument. I mean you'll be very
Justified in having an argument. The urgency
Rhythm'll come you'll be away

For weeks but it isn't that, is it. You'll finish
That book, it cutting a bit more
Away before a burning periodically which ain't all that bad.

Some Takeaways

They boast about their love of food, and have always
Been big eaters, they say—you hear; so you buy them
A lifetime pass to a Michelin-starred restaurant. They then say,
"I'm not hungry!"

For the rest of their life and how *dare* you
Assume that they are and it's the same
All the time when they just
Want to eat in peace!!!

Bouncebackability

"Who's in charge of my head today?
...
Sucker!"
—Metallica, 'My World'

Can you tell
When I'm on a bridge here on the edge
Wanting attention affection

Barely, before I moon you all an action-

At-a-distance experiment
Avoidant attachment
Delinquent behaviour I favour

Even less than you, if I'm being honest. Only it's where these paths can lead me!
OK fine—truthfully? I need me

Like a hole in the head
On days like these. Though

They can still leave us

Tied up at the end
Sometimes in this bun-
Gee
With
Our
Pants
Down Weeeee!
Apparent-

The Chase

Manic pixie girl

All cut up
Madhouse

Ran into our theatre
Flashed the lecturer
The line you wanted

Scratched the equations
“Fathers! Fathers!”
Tackled

*

I’m sat at the front drawing rough
Sketches over the differential handouts.
I’ve a notebook full of them, so I couldn’t have done them all
Since she turned up, the investigator
Concludes. And I’m so calm
Now on the rack and he has this impenetrable
Stomach ache. “Lack of iron!” she is
Screaming across the universe, only I can tell.
“Is that me and him and him and him
And him?!” The investigator hyper-
Ventilating with my book—shreds it.
I float to the ceiling and ruin everything.

Unifier

Spazzing back into the world, a Newtonian
Easing into quantum, needing
Moments to get my rhymes in
Order: I’m done. Not really: it’s boring

How they’ve feigned! So I’m aim-
Ing to deconstruct the destructive
Instructions of poets and the habits
Of addicts alike; that don’t like

Me I can feel it all around, their
Fear at what they find inside them, apples
By the pound not fall-

Ing too far from the tree, a theory
Of everything needed
To explain the incoherent here, I’m guessing?

Decalcomania

Fractals stuck on the surface
Curves in the snow, spineless
(Actually I can’t say that: the shelves
Are full of splinters

As if they're wooden up there too). It means
They have no impact
Outside *their* snow, obviously—their
Model complex

Complex. And I'm obviously talking
Pollocks; while I'm so close
To losing *myself* all the

Times in them: how else
Is one to enjoy the snow
Plow simulator they pretend's to die for?

Tell Me About Despair

"I needed someone to bleed"
—The Cars, 'Just What I Needed'

After Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good
Walks in the room again. My body
Says no bird
Brain says yes it loves what it loves I
Allow you over, provide
Poetic guidance, swallow
Another father's suicide note. He didn't do it.
You wanted
To share it you did
Have I can't find words
For a week the world
Goes on, meanwhile, able
To just be geese, no repentance
In sight. Someone
Crawls to his note
-Book unpoetically; you shouldn't
Take his advice
On writing, they say: harsh? Exciting!
Over and over and over

Down With Rith Mettick

"At least metaphorically, the ego is lost in the mirror and it continues to be lost in language"
—Sherry Turkle, 'Why are you here?', The Meaninglessness of Meaning

"They're sleeping, Miss. They're sleeping. An' we gotta keep it down so we don't disturb their sleep"
—Mister Turkle, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, directed by Miloš Forman, 1975*

The Ashberys funnel
Another stare and the village
Plasticised in return has nunna that
And sprouts another dumb president,

The Buddhists saying nowt; though hear
Their frowns they're coming back now—
This one goes ham when he's cleared
A pinch more socially and the neural

Octopen protects, cannon fodder
For you guessed it: they all like me,
They all like me. There is no way

To truly understand one's ~~place dilemma~~ lot
Until you are debilitated by the noun
Replacing the experience of whatever it was for you.

Fuck Off, Mate

I wanted to run under a bridge. It was lined
With daffodils. This actually happened and it was how
I was looking at it
When I was running: there were other things. Say what you see.
I was looking for something ambiguous. Perhaps
A flow state yes but it had not yet been documented. Ambiguous
And unique. It wasn't until I got to the end of this
Lane under the bridge that I realised I hadn't truly experienced
The lane. Let me say that again
So you can understand me
Even though it is not a moment I could experience myself:
It wasn't until I got to the end of this lane under the bridge
That I realised I hadn't truly experienced the lane.
Ah—you see *that* time
It wasn't the same river either, was it. Then I saw another me
Running on another path,
And you know what I wanted to do, don't you?
Cringe if you don't but we can't
Save everyone. O you run too? WOW that is fa-
I mean that's taking
The effort far
Too seriously when we cannot actually experience…
OK let me say it again
For you because you mightn't have heard
It and you'd have changed
Since then if it was you I was even talking to before, that is; I'll say it
A bit differently this time
As required: It wasn't until I got
To the end of this lane under the
Bridge that I realised I hadn't
Truly experienced the lane. We never reach it. Sort of.
Sit with it. No not the *poem*—the experience.
Well yes that's… technically right.
Fuck off, mate.

Discontinued

"Let me finish—I'm saying
That I could only start saying this
When the first father did it."

"Bro."

All the Croci

Avatars in straitjackets with crossed fingers
Behind their backs every third thing
Feigned is Freudian. I preferred the dissonance
From downstairs gone by morning; don't know

What I'm doing here. There's too many apple trees
On display each stanza. Uncle is a calligraphist.
Silent treatment every line its own igloo—
Snowball. O anything to keep the weather

At bay and the body in ice. We be slating ourselves.
The absolute state missed before the awards ceremony. I ain't
Having it: me wrote tha speech too? I deserve

All the croci of the episodes. I didn't say
"I deserve". I'm… O god: uncle is a calligraphist.
Silent treatment every line its own igloo—

Glad to Be of Use

I am here for all the homeless Hamlets. I'm pretending!
A pen has been skunking around
Being clever. Uses my pronoun.
Knows to add this here.
And then Quine—yes! The pen has a mind!
I spent so many *years*
Feeling the *nonsense* of his findings—sensing
The pseudo-pinnacle
He represented in our cresting age. And now
I *know* it like faith
And so I must tell you. And so create another set: I know
Too well what I am doing
To the whole world on days
Like these when I am freed a touch more, says pen
(Just ensuring) and it isn't
Saving these Hamlets, maybe
Setting more free! Check the local
News in a week they'll be a spike of something
Not all so trivial before an inching towards
Quiet. But perhaps
That was it, that
Energy. Ah. O. The ringing
Meets the air and the face; it is only the

Mentioning on them that does it again.

Some kind of occurrence
Two slashes ago. I hope
Not to remember enough for the interview
About what this means. Who am I thumbing? Language
Is a game. You pretend to play darts
With your pretend heart. We
Allow you and hope you keep manicking
From the pub to the abundant shore
In a dull, respectable uniform
All the same cuts
Away from “abundance”. There are shadows on the
Walls unsurprisingly, the paintings
Just off making them. Nothing is special. I’m instigating
Another speaker as I go. I Google
“Instigate” and manage flow, fate. For Pete’s
Sake—who is he?! Don’t… don’t tell me
It’s all phoney. The whole lot? It’s not all for moi; I
Sometimes say that
At dinner with friends. I am always on the verge
Of quartering myself on the table
Because of how the thrower thumbs
The staff, because
I had my story about the darts. No I did.
I cannot even be bothered to shout. Not like that anymore.
I never acknowledge it but I did play darts; that’s part
Of my past and I am not proud
Say but I have zillions in me ready to quarter.

Did I? I am sorry it’s just that the sheets
Are spread out on the table. You, to get back
To that?—are a product
Of such gruesome
Practices. And we cannot return.
We are thinking of one particular persons.

Certainly Not for Your E-Zine

I move between rooms. This isn’t saving anybody.
Not a workshop, no. I entertain
Woe as a signifier. Then I’m off again

Elsewhere: an island.
A mood.
An overwhelming experience overwhelming that doesn’t include you.

A fugue
Defying the expected feeling of space.
A waste of it.

A waste of it
Demonstrating it is all in you

(Maybe it is then?) if only

We choose. This is going to have to be quite long
Now and *there*—do you understand? I addressed it.

Public Service Announcement

Baldwin's looped back through
On my feed having one of his episodes. O God—
I stink. I mean is this
My skunk? I've clocked it
Straight away we'll be OK. Look
At my bookshelf—I promise. Hopefully
I am deep into my career by this time. They'll be incremental
Evidence against it, yet it still happens. O God—
I'm stuck. I mean is this
My shtick? I've clocked it; it is outrageous:
Fuck it. O God. Hopefully
The climate is still boiling by this time
Societally so this can at least have an impact
In cooling it
Some by morning
Like a good spanking. What was I thinking
At the mirror? I head out
Eventually and the girls
Indicate that I have been lying
Around too long: Afternoon
Already, girls? Do I need to say
O God? What would the episode dictate—what time
And place? Inconsequential; to face
The day! It's 10:03
AM and I have just
Cleaned my face and best be off, if only
To save this self? Why not.

It's Not My Fault

He found it difficult
In hindsight being the only sexually abused
Player in the football team
Or so he thought
Marking himself
Chasing shadows. He looks for a box
To tick a hand
Rests on his hand. We are now in HR.
It has been seconds
Or minutes. What is senseless. Disrespectful. But I can play
Now too. I'm actually alright.
How long did it take. It takes
Time but I am now a decent finisher.
You don't have to fill it in if you don't want to.

Good Luck

Absolutely everything is dystopian!
Ignore me: someone was looking. For years
It…
It was… someone else.

The man on the street
Is looking back and he is grotesque.
How does she do it though. It is absolutely
Interplanetary! I no longer vote. I do not care.

It…
It is… her hair.
I am walking home
With my shopping. Reminiscing

I now call it. Here today and that. It means the fears
I saw never came true for me.

It Knows It's a Mess

"This protein smells like ground bait." I had another paltry
Paltrow this morning and the morning after that
What the fuck am I doing here. Who bought me this.
You're closing?
Is beautiful and maybe they do own it all.
God only knows the number of times

I've stopped you masturbating. The legacy
Is cumulative like these blue plaques
Being removed or that look-backable bottom.
We all await a poorly-thrown towel to dry
Our anti-semitism on. Now I *must*

Be here, for it *is* impressive—in future—
That I designed these edges. Your *super*visor?!
Block your own sun! They've wires! We've distractions.

Shrine of Hypocrisy

I think of the things
That I cannot be bothered to name
Today that slide into the sea
Like something out of Dante

As I look from the window of Pret, watching
The Rushmores
Go by into inevitability
That I need not explain either

From this stool. No I mean where
I am *sitting*. The museum

Is opposite but it's every-

Where—yeah; nothing
Falls apart really, but rests
On each other. While thicc remains in, or sumin.

Minutes Later

'Shrine of Hypocrisy'? Who wrote that?
Wot it mean? Wot
Me need?

So many characters to come through
Still: excuse
Me—it might be that

I need more time; I'm dry-
Ing up as I'm dry-
Ing out (critics

Can tell. And yet what are they reading?) like it ties
Together what I'm leaving
Here, my soul

Above the paper still—yup; some
Remaining stuck: yuk! But does he give one?

Months Later

Cring.... I'm publishing them.

So Brave

Anything can be manufactured. Take
The opening line
Brought to you by the god
Of hunger, or similar,

And run with it: you'll be a star
Locally or in a community
For minutes. Dine out on it
Forever. Never touch

The severance creating these
Chips of ice itself. Make exceptions
For the part you play in history.
Synonym persona

On stage and ECT
Your waves in stanzas.

And Me

As I latch my dummies onto everything, impulse
Mirroring poetry
Cinema drama drama drama
Literature. A simple

Passing comment, a linguistic
Turn only I can use
Discrete from the body; pain

Only I could possibly feel
Discrete from anything imaginable by anyone else

So much so I needed sixteen personas, at best
And dummies

And new frameworks only I understood
For minutes: dine out on it
Forever. Never touch the severance creating these chips of ice itself.

When I Stop Choosing

"Where have I got this energy from! I like it!"
Watching themselves: no
I won't take the job; or
Blocked. When does this stop?

A Shepherd Talking to a Sheepdog on the Side of a Cliff

It still has to be in code a little bit
Doesn't it? I know it's only a little bit!
It's because they could still be wolves. Exactly: the moon.
It's weird as fuck!

See! Fuck sake: they just act
Like that involuntarily sometimes
Around whelps. Yeah I don't know why they then feign dismay at the mess

I apparently make: no
Sheep? No shepherd nor sheepdog! And this
Here now is further reason

Why I need to be careful with what I tell you
Around the… ruminants (they are starting to realise
They're "sheep"): it can also make them horny, bizarrely—look.

Somebody Gotta Do It

Criticise me again and I'm going to tell everyone you consciously stared too long at that
fourteen year old in her knee socks that one time.
I leave the house

And glide down the street above history
And criticism, obviously (aware

It's round) and imagine what I'd do here: conceptually
This is difficult for a being to do for more than a few seconds

Dehistoried: I land
And explain how the dialogues have changed

Poetically for me; like, they aren't
Just between me? No. Not at all. He's lying. There's outsiders;

Others—
They're the lunatics.

Another Another

Weird
Way of spelling
"Plenty
Of exercise and rest and water", that.

Deus Ex Machina

"This is the work of a future all-time great in full command of his powers. Damn, indeed."
—Neil McCormick, 'Kendrick Lamar is the star hip hop has been waiting for – Damn, review',
The Telegraph, 14 April 2017

"JOYYYYYYYYYY!!!!!!" today,
Gone tomorrow. Look at what I can manifest.

I am not sure who this new poetic mess—
That I follow, penning,

Guessing—is. Some kind of spiritual guest
I AM BLESSED

with. Some kind of old test
-Ament from something I have done

In old skin I AM BLESSED
With repeating for our benefit (I think); it's

Too self-aware again! I'll never be thin!(?) *This*
Dud set me going like a fat old knob: put

Whatever you can in
To stop it playing out nonsense

IRL again. I...
I can't put that. Give him a few years though.

*

I stick to this crippling persona all the time, it getting me ill,
I'm fully aware of it and I'm crippled in it, conscious of my perpetuation of it,
Wanting to die inside my lies all of the time. I cannot even feel the horror fully.
I am inside a facade
Of a facade. Absolutely nothing makes sense about it.
I bounce between pure social playbooks.
I don't even have any beliefs.
I can't even feel anything.
I am a fontanelle in hell and I barely remember how to spell.

Don't Know Him Either

By 9 am I have ~~drafted~~ finalised
Two poems, got dressed
And undressed five times, trying on
Different outfits
Inside them, auditioned
Three wives
All at the same time; I tell myself

As I make coffee for us all: it's quite
Amazing what he can get done
With nothing else going on
But himself. Yet *would* they come
Along anyway, the poems,
If he wasn't watching them all
Unfold on the desk, thanks to his

New discipline: 6 am: meditate
Away Billy Collins. OK most of him.
Then go for a run. Have absolutely no fun
With trash. Own it—take responsibility—
Of that. Don't delete it. Descend
Into baser feeling and display it
Like a confessional poet. Have

Respect for the reader by having
No respect for the reader. Eat more; hydrate more regularly. Be mindful.
Arrange a date—no pressure. You can just enjoy it and see how you feel;
You don't owe anyone anything! You're *allowed* to do that.
Sit with the feeling; notice
How it's moved through so quickly.
Ruin it by writing "liminality". Masturbate.

Heavy is The Head

My colleague—who hates people
That eat at Wetherspoons, by the way—is
Returning to work
Today: they've been struggling. I wonder
If they'll bully me

Again. They liked a post
On Instagram
Which suggested
Their suffering
Has “filled them with compassion, gentleness,
And a deep
Loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen.” They’re on reduced hours.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross quote

Way Ahead of You

“If you ever need someone to talk t—” I am not

Going to sleep with you
And become him

And kill myself.

The Norton Anthology of Poetry

“But nobody else is gonna put it right for me
Nobody but me is gonna change my story
Sometimes you have to be a little bit naughty”
—Tim Minchin, ‘Naughty’, Matilda: The Musical

I do not care that you’ve been to their funeral: I was fucked by mine.
Nor do I give a fuck about the Jews or Palestine.

Well, I best be leaving!—would you look at the time?
Nope! No evidence. No crime.

[A small woodland animal entered stage left as the lead actor was dragged from the stage.
The small woodland animal began dancing as the lead actor shouted:]

I didn’t want to be childish! I just want to get in The Norton Anthology of Poetry!
The Norton Anthology of Poetryyyyy!

[The crowd breathed a sigh of relief once the lead actor disappeared completely and could not be heard shouting anymore. The small woodland animal continued to dance and the crowd started to smile
And laugh together as they looked around the audience at each other in further
And further raptures of glee as they stood up before climbing
Onto their seats as they clapped along and the small woodland
Animal seized its moment to own the stage just as it had been
Manifesting since it first started attending
Amateur dramatics drop-ins. Then:]

The Norton Antholo-

[But the eight gunshots back stage could not be heard over the orgy that commenced in the auditorium.]

Children's Poem

You will finally come up through the clouds
To find the ceiling
Wide open shouting at you, "You can't do that!"

Do it.

Where We Are

"The "art" part—knowing what important details to leave out"
—John Ashbery, 'Forties Flick'

I am writing you a farewell letter years in advance of your funeral.
I am aware
Of the masses that will read it, and that has an influence
On its tone and my use of syntax. As you will have guessed, I have no idea who this is.
We always struggled to be separate from everything around us, as
Was the age. I have been dead
Before and will be again. I was that when I wasn't with you.
We were never as we were.

Flicked

S'like flashing a double-sided coin
The group made for you—forgetting—to the one
Patient on the ward
That's there voluntarily. It's still a stunning ward
Though; all the patients
Say so. Doesn't matter it's falling apart. You
And Volun be flicking
The coin and making a mint—"This is
Mint!" Volun be saying; and all
Rapture as their strapped in their seats
They strapped in themselves, you, who tighten
The final ratchet, stand
Back and don't like it. "Not what it was;
Why I dress so?" Your clothes
Rancid. In sync, somehow, but… these
Games—patients: the whole issue
Is they are narrowing. "You can't spend these
Anywhere! How many of you are actually detained here?"
I was then, using Volun—
The coin. The artiste—tossing
Magic trick books
And "Best and/or Worst Dad Joke" books
Out of the window. No one
Unfastened their seatbelt and I was making…
Little, in fact: I'd fleeced them so much. I needed more war-

A turnstile. A fence
Around something and a turnstile? Of myself?
Of Volun?

“This is not allowed”
And Volun: I am confident this will work.

*

It became me and Volun: the ward
Wouldn’t com-

Because that’s all there is!

…Come. Yeah—still strapped there; I find it
Ridiculous, quite frankly. We had to eat
The artiste. Why would you interview us?

It’s still double-sided, yeah. Still tos-

Flicked.

Tangled up in You

I use you to move from you, wordless
Of your words, I will be, Diogened
With all these coats; we were in love;
I refer to myself

Thoughtless to the home we built
And ruined. I was selfish. I wanted to be a maniac
With plaques and it is everything you regard.
Discordantly brusque; I’ve never heard it

Our break broke me so much I knew rules
Would only keep me, from you.
I have been lying with other bodies, bones
You’d know. They’d feel familiar.

You can *feel* how extraordinary I’d be; and yet
So empty, too. Unsavable. *Unsavable*.
Our lives entwined
This touching too; but only briefly.

You wanted to stay. I decided I would only call you
Six times: if that did not work, no more. Since
I have been ink alone
Travelling through these worlds

Causing what I cause, indifferent to my scarring—
Your curves; whatever we *did* have—
I will accept that: gone, mon amour.
I’ll die in my own street, a thief—you’ll see.

“Somebody Needs to Hear This”

Such a compensatory way to ask me how my weekend has been
On a Monday morning
After you’ve clearly internalised me in your mind as your nemesis
And argued with me all weekend: just watch

Us talk from the side
Some more and see our lives grow
Apart as we soar ourselves individually
Into our own existences

In real life. I have a friend
Who used to be a colleague too and she used to talk to me
Furiously and then masturbate. We hardly spoke
At work during this period, but I just so happened

To become that role for her at a time in her life
When she was leaving. She now has her own
Successful podcast. Now *we* could have a podcast together
Playing you out! But you want to highlight everything.

What Is It Now?

After John Ashbery

Up through the boy scouts
Of Nagoya. O yes the Goya

Exhibition too. Yes I’ve been.
Yes it was there that I went I made

Sure I went. *Ensured*. Stunning
Art, this being all we deserve.

I’m glad I found it; a pain—
Laborious excuse me to sieve

Through to the good stuff. I felt
Everything is healing. We are waiting

For them: Tuesday is my day;
I haven’t replied to the request they

Can wait for me. Not today, no.
I’ve my new floristry course.

Fins Nabp

The commodious virus, both unsafe
And hilarious, warning
Itself of us
Of itself. Can’t write about—

Get twisted and horny. Poorly poorly
Poorly mean: slips! Compensatory
Plumage. Punage! Baggage!
We could do whatever we like

With language. On my child's life—
Ocriminalled kin.
I don't even know what I'm putting in.

I smear my mess on the papers.
I cadence my massturbovation.
From nerve of bore to mend of puddles.

The New Guards

We are the lifeguards at the edge
Of the pool; then the pool stretched got
Lazy. All sorts jumped in some
Became lifeguards: it means more

Then jumped in; so we had to mind
Them too. Like meta-lifeguards
Not saying anything we now are far away
From the pool—the new guards.

It hardly made any sense
To any of the saturated pool
Or new screws (life dropped
You'll notice). And guess

Who they all resented, despite
Allowing their tight armbands.

Just Because

You won the room; and what should you do
Now you still feel poo? And said something
That maybe was not true
Of you. Or you or you or you.

You've got it: a bigger room! A wider truth
Of when you were a goof, or sleuthed
What happened under your first roof (it is also

What you continue to want to do, you will tell them again
In a week or two). Suddenly the bigger room
Is poo though too. You will not be returning. Goons! Until

Poof! You or you or you
Are back together as you! Where have you been?
No clue! Though, you do feel brand new; and aren't
Sure if poetry is the responsible route.

Parked Up

I bend at the hip
And send to the tip
Of my pen a signal
From years ago; but you

Don't get that now
Though. No you aren't
Slow—I'm learning
To turn in

Abstract flows, rather than such grisly
Prose of my innermost
(Took me years to catch up. I'll definitely be writing something really personal for you again
tomorrow though—fuck it)
I suck at

Consistency: I probably
Won't be downward dogging by the end of the week, and telling you
On Monday
Who I'm sleeping with again.

Point-Scoring

"I give you all you need to know"
—Nine Inch Nails, 'Mr. Self Destruct'

Waking from my scored skin
That made me vote wrong

Took long: these songs
Now be spelt (smelt?) out to goad

Shadow gongs, tongue
Twisters to give blisters

To bigoted mongs, fond
Of tying shoes to you, I am,

From those that be clue-
Less, dur—obviously; for you

To lose yourself in, snootily; as I
Ruin my

Legacy for retards
Now beneath me.

Demonstration

You're out of control. It's someone over there.
I'm obsessed with this theme and just can't get it.

I'm trying really hard. I'm grant funded.
You've got it together and I'm separate.

It's how it goes: there's those
Like me, in the know—mindful;
Poetic. There's those that ain't.
I'm no saint but you've got to be working hard.

I'm the bard of fourteen square yards.
It was sixteen but we cut them off: toffs.
You might well scoff! Most the time I see and remain silent.
Poet? I prefer pilot.

That's what happens when I lose myself.
You're something of a demonstration.

Stuck in Traffic

She's back on my brain
I'm going insane
Was his name Dave?
What if it was Bartholomew?

She didn't want any of us
Not the poet, the speaker, the zoided you
What a palaver
Although, I was a bit suss

When I took it harder than her:
I started butchering my hair
O yeah? I'll show you despair
Yeah—I've got a point to prove

"So if you ain't careful there'll be
A carful giving you a mouthful in the next one." "Who the fuck is he talking to?"

You Learn

Everyone is ill
Jagged Little Pill
I clearly haven't paid
I'm clearly taking none

I spin spin spin (I can't sit still)
Where have I been
Everywhere
I'm inside everything (between spinning)

My shadows over there
There; anywhere
I create my own despair
There's nothing left to do

I will literally die for these lines
It could be me; it could be you

Dharma Path

"Time magazine said it could not discern
Whether his political views were left- or right-wing."
But can the poem sing?
Remember Usher's 'Burn'?

I can't anymore. I just can't.
I'm an industry plant. I'm never bored.
Nothing is boring and nothing is real.
OK I'm gena discern so I can make sense of it—

I'm going to Reddit
Because I'm fed up of it.
PHEW now I'm full up. I don't give a fuck. Haggis changed me.
Sending pages I ain't supposed to.

Where are my shareholders?
If only I had shareholders I'd be kept on the right path.

This Is Exquisitely Paced

Lennon beat his wife
Women should carry knifes
The theatre's an echo chamber
You were there for Beckett's first album
"Play! I meant play!

Oh god—they might *realise*!
I'm going to write an essay."
Why does it raise its head when it clearly wasn't being spoken to?
Tate! Plath!
I can't count.

Excellent debut, mind. It's a shame he's a footballer.
"Miss—can we wank in here?"
Hughes. Hughes hogging the touchline.
Cope couldn't cope with it. Rightly so.

The Great Matter

Sigh? I'm having more of that I'm having more of an experience than you again thing.
The room is explicitly like my childhood living room. You don't even try to hide it anymore.
Conceptually commodifying: I know you wouldn't understand;
It's how I meant to start this thing: we're all

Trying to divorce Catherine. "Annulment!
It's called an annulment! For heaven's sake." I don't even try to hide it anymore.
When I feel like this I feel like I was poor and so now I was poor. This is me—
This is the real me. You know what it means

Too, don't you: you've heard all this before. That's right: criminally
Horny at the moment. I lose myself. I'm not really this. I've
Been to *private* therapy to label all the nuances of this narcissism; the therapist
Doesn't get it but we have to allow for these matters.

And so we must keep holding court about it—empathy; because the shame
Is going to be quietly devastating if I am also compelled to live in isolation.

Could We Not Have Just Taken the Cameras to the Asy- Ah. I See

They were bussed from the asylum to the studio
Straight on to live TV. "I was listening to Drake
On the way, Mike, and as I was singing along I sang
The word nigga along with him." "Right," said Mike.
"What are we here to film again?" said Nettles. "We
Are not being recorded. This is straight to live TV," replied
Mike. "We are teaching the bigots
Stuff." "Like what?" "Dunno." Nettles

Started masturbating just as the feed was about to go live, so
One of the nurses lay beneath his chair
Out of shot and held his arms down by his side.
"Let's talk more after," said Mike. "I get why we're locked in there
And shown here, but I still hate how we have to be so many things
For them also." "You've said this before and I never get it."

*

You could leave me in a bookshop allllll day.
(Just off the screen like that?) Yes.

O yeah—quantum mechanics? Yeah. Quantum mechanics.
O! Another presenter, I see! I had a feeling about him too though. Yeah.

Common misconception.
Gossamer. Palimpsest.

*

(Still like this?) Yes.
I've tried everything. I've tried everything
Including the orange
Woolly hats and I still
Always feel it.

*

(Thanks but it's OK: they don't need you
Anymore. Honestly. Honestly you can
Trust us.) OK.

Stewart Lee. Exactly. Yeah.

Not always.

*

[All asylums are closed. All television studios are closed.
Everyone—dressed in the same uniform—races towards the end in a joyous frenzy]
(Is this to be spoken then

As I am running? Not
Not

Not quite

It *could*?) Point out suppressed perverts and monetise.

Live a Created Life

"Art won't forgive life, no more than life will."
—Frederick Seidel, 'What One Must Contend With'

I ~~drop~~ throw the ball
In future and fugue
To get it ghosting
All these other posts; which isn't

Infuriating: the intermediate
Messiah complex is flexing
Again. But why do *you* like this?
The self-awareness *sounds*

Good in bed but the writer's read
Schopenhauer and loves
Radiohead, so you know it's all
Dead beneath the penmanship.

And you're one of the ones I was supposed to be
Disappearing on too? Shit.

Wuthering Heights

I sell my catalogue to Sony.
I'm commissioned to write a poem to celebrate Emily Brontë.
I'll never visit Dorridge train station again; nor

Have I ever: I'm at Moor Street. I'm as light as a feather.
It's me, myself,
And whatever I think along these lines. You have absolutely

No time and everyone around you
Is crippling you. Don't
Watch the news. Keep yourself amused

By curating thousands of versions of you. Take no views.
Snooze.
Lose. Take on shadows. Shadow

The elites' Wikipedias. Regard everyone as inferior. Crush the joy out of every future project
and subject yourself to snap experiential careers.

Pulling Out

I'm off to see the bard. I'm flaccid
Passing bridges. St Andrews. Druids Heath

Eventually. Sort of. I had a tough start.
It's now hard: I can't get off.

I'm rarely bothered about anything
In a poem anymore. I'm philosophical

Concrete. It causes problems.
It creates walls. I sleep fine—

Ignore me when I suggest otherwise.
There's too many stations to mention.

We once got an extension so who am I to complain.
I'm seeing Hamlet later. I wonder if he's still insane.

I reckon he was blagging it. What
A worn out premise. I return to stasis and leave a little stain.

Throwing a Ball Against the Wall

I was built on rhythm. I like to ruin it.
It's some kind of condition: I'm fluid

Enough for a bit then I do something stupid like this and botch things completely.
It's just who I am: I'm a sham—

A tin man. Dorothy's
Fake mate putting pen

To paper barely able to carry on. I sin.
I throw loads of drafts in the bin.

Some of them I release. I disturb
The pieces and crease to myself. I shouldn't be out of the house

But I am, maybe
Even inside your spouse. I've become

Some kind of poetic lout
With a nous for infuriating noise, it sounds like

Just about. I lack
The sense to have more poise. I waste lines

To get rhymes. If anyone chimes
In on my life I just change my number.

I write in a slumber. Samantha Mumba.
I chunter in stanzas

To forget the times that gave me
This madness. I bear no resemblance

To this. Kidding I need an ambulance, please.
I pray to God

On my knees and He applauds
How easy I find it: "I've never seen anything like it!" He says; and pays

Me nothing. I'm tripping. Not really.
I am really. I've

A feeling we're not in Kansas anymore, Sammy; because
I always come back to *this* love——enough.

Front Flip

"Such dim-conceived glories of the brain"
—John Keats, 'On Seeing the Elgin Marbles'

My self-veneration. My self-referentiality.
My knowing of cadence, your minds—
Our Eliotic cycles. How hotel and/or casino
I was before I'd found

Myself in time and space
With two mains at the checkout: modern life
Will not allow our awakenings. We are bound…
You are bound to my strifes

It seems. And again. And again now.
When is Ye going to close up definitively
The glory of 'The Waste Land'? I've gone
All out of whack. I'm slacking. Crap.

I watch myself land in my own lap.
I unfold and implode my own own fad.

Zoided

I zoided for poetry: I'm Beckett
And Joycey. Lock up my daughters!
Lock up his daughters! Though

I can't get back: I faked it
And broke me to make it. I'll never
Ever slack again (poetically)

Have a wife
Or friends (poetically). Bring me loads of clippings!
And dictionaries! He's feeling thesaurusy! Though

On the bus, I ~~ride~~ travel
Along with me. And he's with you too!
It's almost rude—

He's beyond attuned. Cool.
Breaking rules. Somebody's fool (Ha! (But I am!)).

O Not Again

All these pain bodies
Of work: the Poetry Review
Won't accept them
As they'd be out of work

Once all the other authors
Worked it out and did what I do
Too and that's why I write them
Poo sometimes so they don't

So I can be the only one doing them. The New
Yorker might accept a semi-
Psychotic poetic Eckhart Tolle though?

Wait—what… what was I saying?
And what's this pen?
O not again

"We Speak With an Accent Exceedingly Rare!"

I go to Coventry
I'm sent above me
There's a theme here
As if

I'm a seer
My bus gives way
I won't go away
I'm starting to dissociate

I'm not going to date
If I date while I'm here it'll go wrong
I'll bite my tongue instead
If someone chats me up I'll just have to play dead

"You want a cathedral we've got one to spare!"

Why am I doing this. My life is outrageous

Indie Publishers

"And you know we're on your side"
—Steely Dan, 'Change of the Guard'

More and more about being absolutely fine: you wanted me
To buy it? OK! If it's no bother!
Don't rush!

But I wanted
A change
Like you implied? Only you keep

I'll shut up.

These Are but Wild and Whirling Words

"A tourist in the ghetto, not afraid of anything
Except death and anything else that could maybe hurt them, oh yeah"
—The Strokes, 'Taken for a Fool'

I visit the Midlands. If I see
My parents I'm jumping in the Avon.
They taught me to write so brazenly when I was still a virgin.
I think I'm in heaven. I think
I created the heavens and it is heavenly
For minutes as my body adjusts. In the past
This lasted for decades as I separated
From my surroundings or lost myself in pounding away
In sheets before finding the keyboard. The lyrical import
Is directly proportional to the pain
The body stores before it releases it in this shit. In a bit,
I'm gena buy a t-shirt with Billy on it, I reckon—the sonnet writer.
But could he write one in one go? We'll never know! Was it even him? Purportedly there were many.
I am getting the fuck out of here unless I can start to draft myselves more steadily—heart's racing.

Warw(ick) the Kingfaker

I'm going through Warwick
I'm instrumental to the War of the Roses
I'm instrumental to all these poses
I'm a kingmaker in my head and deserve this crown of thorns

That's a difficult stanza to come back from
Unless you are me: I was a Yorkist
Now I'm a Lancastrian
Now I'm in Leamington

Pretending I'm the most important person in the kingdom

(I'm having fun, but I'm terrified of choosing the wrong side: the battle
Expanding inside me makes me want to hide; I might
Have to bomb the cathedral again when I get there)

I'm joking. It's only a poem. I'm no threat
In fact you're going to miss us Plantagenets (I'm shitting it (he's not really))

A Poem the Likes of Which Nobody Has Ever Seen Before

I'm obviously coming back together, then I *might* be silent forever.
But then there'd be nothing decent left to read!
You'd have to keep rereading me! Only I reckon you'd only get violent
Again and recreate some more catastrophe

That splits me so I'd have to write more again: it's difficult
Being everything. Especially when you've no idea what's going on
In the world because you look at nothing because it is all
Nonsense. Because I'm the only one that makes sense!

I'm sitting on the fence and watching everything and I'm meant
To fix it all while you all just squawk and squall over bibles
And walls and goals and molehills and follicles and split
Hairs and splitting the bill and shadows that make you ill

While you don't acknowledge them: I'm as miserable as sin
Waiting! Some of the poetry you lot are writing in the meantime's tin pot too. I'm not even
joking—atrocious. Deserves to be in Timbuktu.

Plot Twist

I'm a megalomaniac
Literarily. I should lecture
At a red brick uni, really. I should be
Completely detached from how the world functions. I should
Write just to get invited to wanky functions. Sorry!
The person I dictate my characters to
Is extremely ~~funny~~ uncompromising
Sometimes. I mean I've been compromised! I mean

I don't know what I'm comprised of: I am a god
Or a sod, I should
Have said. I lie around
All day in bed making up a shed
Load of shite thinking myself
Deserving of plaudits. And I release nowt of note as I'd rather not hang around with dicks.

Talking to God

Man. God.

I just post them
And don't even look now. It's madne-

O! Hi! God! I didn't expect you
To really reply! But you've been here

The whole time?! Madness!
Madness after all!

Anyway like I was saying I just post them

And don't even look now. I don't scroll.
I don't scowl.

I'm not a night owl.
I'm not a weirdo

Poetry avatar
On the prowl

Acting droll
Or odd

For all to see
Liking whatever you do: what've

I said! God! I thought I was talking to you!
Save me! I'm being unkindly!

Keep kindly
Ignoring them? OK.

Bit Meh

O God. Ohhhhh no.
You're eventually gena know
How slow you are
If I carry on at this rate
With these flows. Mate—I can't
Go on in any other way
I'm afraid: I am certifiably
Insane. I just don't go to the doctors

Or converse with anybody
As the real m- O God.
Ohhhhh no. What have…
What has he said and what has he done
This time: had fun and fucked with you again? Yeah!
Bit "meh" this one, though.

What You're Good At

OK now he's proper gone

And it's just me
And myself talking and I can say
That I still don't get it

And I don't see myself in the mirror
And I don't get that I'm talking to myself
And it's going to be difficult
To finish but I will

Anyway because I feel
I should and that I need it—clearly!—
Even if I don't really feel that. I'll

Sit with it
But I'm not feeling too confident or impressed
And I'll probably be left concluding he's stupid.

Awake

For fuck's sake
Again: I've now got
The Joyce Estate threatening me
For insinuating

James bonked his daughter Lucia. I said no such thing!
I loved *Ulysses*! A wild accusation
By them. To my eyes tears it does bring!
I'm now riddled

With fear, not
For the possible civil case
They could raise against me, but because
This whole thing may result in me being seen

As the cause of ruining the dynasty of the greatest literary artist
Of the 20th century. And probably Beckett's acclaim too!
I know! What is it all built on! The nonsense
In this poem, I mean. Can they not see

How much work "again" is doing for me
In that second line: I'm only
Having people on—maybe even *myself*!—so the line
Between truth and fiction

Gets lost for fuck's sake again away a lone a lost a last a loved a long the

Last Ten Minutes of a Shift

Ahhhhh fuck. Fuck fuck fuck.
Just my luck. I'm having no luck, am I.
I don't know why. Someone
Looked at me

Out of the corner of their eye, perhaps.
I wanted a chicken wrap
But they only had pork. Who serves pork wraps?
What a whack establishment. I'm embellishing

My story
To the authorities about this—they served me
Nuts when nuts make me go nuts: I'll say that
I reckon. And then they will get shutdown.

My frown never leaves. I'd say I'm… mildly peeved
With how hungry this leaves me.

*

I amble along. I want the end. I don't respond.
I'm clearly fucking starving. I'm minding
My own business
And this genius then comes in

Incoherently talking about pig
Ruining everything else I've ever said
That you may've taken seriously before.
It's like being in some deep solipsism. It's

Like summat to fit this. Brat summer?
Ursa Minor, more like—yeah.
Yeah now what, eh: chicken fillet?
They didn't have it! Bear with: I went

To look and some fucking lunatic
Was side-eyeing me just as I was about to give my order.

HMT

We leave the historic market towns
For the cities; where our newfound

Artefacts—out of our minds—fight in the centre
Between themselves, psychologically-

Backed by academics, we've found
In fact—actually: how we knew nothing before.

How we're always learning.
How one market

Falls into another
To open up more

Debate more
Conversation. More forums

For us to mull it over
And make you understand yourselves, mind.

Then Serious

There are the journal entries
And fantasies
In others and then the loud didactics banging
Against your consciousness ones, cryptic—

Criminal of the author. Exactly what you were thinking, in fact,
Forgotten afterward
Because… what was it?
Used to like it, yeah. Can't think why.

Not *liked*. Respected?
I saw that it had validity. Now it is all
As one sees it
In a particular moment

Except in those elongating stretches
When it's all stran- getting funnier. And then serious.

Half-And-Half Scarfers?

"What's all that around the edge?" It's… We…

We don't talk about that
Too much ourselves: they're like…
Half-and-half scarfers? Do you get that reference? We *are*
Quite open to sports in fact—yes; it's
Them dressing up
In scarves themselves
That drag
The whole industry down. We do find it tough!
We believe
In saying
Whatever you like. But it ain't cricket, is it!

O and we get what they mean: it's them
Themselves that don't. We know it's them saying it!
They just turn up
And throw
A few balls around. Attend a game or two, perhaps?
Then leave paddles, ping pongs,
Shuttlecocks all around the rope.

Rinse

I want it all to end; but…
But then…
But then they'll just be our dodgy dishwasher?
Well in that case, I'm guessing

The good people will have done something
Finally. About time. How we've waited!
Dunno—stains
Stick to it. Surely I've said before; I feel
Like a broken record
With you lot. You can't put that in! Jesus Christ—*rinse*
It first. OK let me do it; we're
Invading *again*?! Keep that down
In there! I'm trying to watch this: I'm struggling
To take it in. What're they waiting for?!
Ah here we go. Yeah—live footage!
I want it all to end.

At the Workshop

It came to me after they died. When I hit the roof—
Yes. What about you? You were saying
At the workshop that-

But I saw you at the workshop. Yes I did!
Why do you call them meetings now? I know you left.
And you sound flustered. *I* sound flustered? I suppose.

Fine. It's because…

It's because it went away
When I felt myself the danger.

"The pain of grief is but a shadow." Exactly.

Liminal Spaces

It was going to be the place that was finally lovely
So I turned up,
But they let all sorts in, which made me grumpy.
Was it hard? What kind of questions is that? Sometimes
They write themselves
Quite easily—yes. But sometimes I really struggled. Depends on the class.
Yes some toxic dynamics. It was going to be the place that was finally lovely.
That's why I turned up. I'd always felt it in me.
Most of us
Were the same: we all felt it
In us—I could tell. Just some toxic ones. I tried to encourage some of the newcomers.
It made me feel warm and fuzzy.
But they really do let all sorts in, which made me grumpy.

Hostel

How would you even know if you've never even been here before—pfft: the other
Side of the island. Not the *party* side.
Who even *goes* to the party side
Anymore. What are you writing? No one

Writes like that anymore: they write
Like this. It's called not being sure, yeah? Like
In between? How could I explain it further? Exactly—it's a drag
Waiting for people like you; I preferred it

When you were still
On the other side, getting wasted, pretending over there. Wot r ya ritin? Fuck!
What are you writing?

You know, I always used to expose myself
On these shores, which made me
Some friends—some others to watch swim.

Another Outlier

I've just blocked my 10,000th ex: Malcolm—
What's next? I'm a genius so I doubt
It's me. Well I'm very consistent, you see—
Obviously. The sex? How dare thee! I never kiss and

It is astonishing for them and I am the highlight of their lives and I think
That may be the problem: have I told you about my journey
Into the adult film industry? I was playing
Around with putting together

A poetry collection. Then I lied about a sex convention
Or something? I can't actually remember. I'd have posted it by now!
Anyway some group then reached out
Wanting to record me

Fucking. And so now I'm blocking
All these women! And speaking to Malcolm Gladwell! All's well!

Fixed It for You

This abstract exercise
Circles separately from the parts of myself
I'd rather not. Let's wait 'til they blow up.
The stanzas grow odds

And ends: prefixes, I suppose…
Some sorta meter, yeah; figurative
Language and- Mood? Erm—
Sure. Sure! I… I…

I mean I *guess* so? HA!—I actually meant
"Suffix" the whole time and you didn't even correct me:
Off ya pop! Back

To the gram it be
For poetry peasants like
O your critiques are so *rude!*

HCE

I finally get round to completing a much needed HIIT workout
And burp out Mein Kampf. Look no one is more surprised than me. No I've not
Got a copy. Of anything! What was I on about again? I untie her

And set her free. "Bored now," I say. "I'll probably sell the restraints."
She has a tantrum. "But I'm in pain! I mean… I love you!"
I still don't relent. "I've work to do. Sorry." "Fine!" She slaps me.

"You know, you're a great poet. I'll be seeing you in thirty years!"
I leave for the office. I measure my line manager's mood
With my integrated wholeness. "*Knackered*, I am," he says. "I thought I'd slept

Well too." Not too shabby! Only I am mightily stupid
For 7 seconds. "I am not sure if you are aware, but I reckon
You say that every 11th day. Do you know

If you said it on… Sunday the 8th?" He plants child
Pornography on my laptop. I'm now scribbling between intervals in the prison yard.

Post

Flat as a pancake now. Flat as a disc.
Flat as a floppy disk. In Minsk:
Unmetaphoric. Useless
Like the Minsk Agreement.

Feel like I'm processing millions of bereavements.
I'm seething beneath it, I bet. Pet
Peeves are nonexistent
At the minute as I am in bed all fucked up

Unable to finish anything, causing
Drifts and rifts in my life, at the minute. I couldn't sieve nits
Through a cargo net if I tried right now. I survive

But barely. I can barely be bothered. O I hovered. But where did that get me?
I was just hovering. I can't be bovved
To hoover. I couldn't pop a zit. I couldn't hoover right now either even if I wanted to.

O No He's Not!

The child inside my head—O boy—
Had an ill time, and is now off
His meds, and won't let you hear
The last of it using the most erratic

Means available—barely legible spokes; feigned
And/or off-the-leash schizophrenic
Refrains—if it wasn't for me
Reigning him in, just

About nowt I am even doing it right now, folks!
And again now, and now, and now: the thought-fix! I love
Nicking lines from tits; fits? No; absolutely
In bits, at times—yis; bouncing

Between flits and starts of this
Not that! Reminds me of- But they don't need to hear it, kid!

Spilt Ink

You mean I didn't need to keep
Trying to draft this one

That was never going to reach the surface anyway?! Fucking hell—
I coulda done with this

Years ago! The time

It's taken to get this right here too.

Morning Dong

After Sylvia Plath

Love set you going like a massive cock
You push back against
Expecting otherwise, blind

To what it set going inside
Yourself: if you ain't trauma-informed
You're fucked. You've never made love.

I'm no more your father
Than the pounding that shatters the mirror
Into a million identities, that all pen

For the surface after again. Not that any had been there before.
Still we try
Knocking more and more, the pushback only scoring

Into these skins further
Poor-us lives. One
Lives one dies

In these scenarios, lots. Better pull back!
Engage in *discourse* first!—unlike this;
Rising the distorted vowels of zoomies.

Mourning Song

After Sylvia Plath

Love'll set you off like someone looking up from a screen. You'll scream

And lose your job for it
And your life'll fall apart at the seams; though you'll want that

Glance back and you'll do anything
To recreate it: you move in with the face
That made it though it hasn't done it since;

And now you live too near the sun
One minute and the dark side of the moon
The next and you shine and moon for it to do it again but it still hasn't done

It yet but you're sure it will soon. You'll get spaghetti down your top.
You'll put your hand on the hob to check you aren't dead
In this star stuff you now exist on and this element

Burns but it still don't matter as the glancer was warm whilst holding the scold
For seconds. "You know, I love our new oven." You read this poem
In passing all loathsome and think I'm a lunatic; 'cause you sometimes see

The glancer's tits and that is better than universal credit. And now you try
Your handful of notes;
"Your unclear sounds whine like goons, you prick."

Poetry (2)

Oxymoronic use of "liminality".

I miss pogs.

Cooldown

Nothing today. Great run;
Optimally endorphined. Desyntacticated; unless
I force it

To tell you all about it.
I run with time so proper there's no Eros;
Nor do I need to slow down
Or rush or have concern for rhythm

Even more or less so than I usually do anyway.
What a fantastically minimal day
As it should be. What is poetry: this
Is what a speakerless negation

Would say if they somehow existed
As a thinly conceptualised conception; and if we gave them
A voice. What a bizarre choice for me to write about.

Thrown

Off we're out again beyond the simulacrum. We know!—
We wouldn't expect you to. Curious

Little peasant, aren't you.

Ah you see that can
Be a bit off
When you live as far out as we do, exploring, what—
How split we are? Good job
You don't get that either!

Like a banana—sure. Might as well be!
In fact, I love cherries on top.

Are you still here? With your devastating
Eye contact? O it'll go—

That's all; along with any *overt*
Prejudices, considering… you know: now *I'm* even thrown!

Often Wonder

We often ponder when we can put it so explicitly. Then we remember
We can't; sometimes we enter
So numb, you think what you think—
We think what we think.
Everyone feigns.

"You can lead a horse to water."
We had to say something.
We are in a desert, I'm leaving

Following my nose and hurdling
Instinctively. 'What's with all the children?' you say

Like clockwork. S'drag!—we do all
Often wonder
Walking out, you inflicted
Soundly in bed for days. While I'm dragging the bed along
Making it up to *your* timekeeping!

Marquee Moon

Crippling delivering the present moment to you
Through all this pornography.
But I have done it, my present moment—

It may be different to yours! That's OK!
And the discipline
Remains interpretative: this isn't

Like music but it's the closest
We've got; but it isn't music. Wider
Scope for… bringing your own world

Exactly! You get it!

So watch it all
Move through, blue

Then red: loud and communal. Then quietly
Disappear in the worn-out present. Maybe!

New SSRI

I want to be an important precursor
With a moody artist's portrait. I've fucked up again: an important
Precursor to the next artistic
Development, *Persona*-sized scholarly debate
Chasing after me. I'll be in the kitchen though
Casually, manipulating my Substack followers. Why
Do I slip through like this? Vampirism
As a… scholarly category. I am not at my best.
I am going to fine-grain these advancements
A lot. O!—how you know I'd never use "a lot"
If I was at my moody best. Shades
Of Didion? I absolutely had not noticed.
A small, unheard-of, almost insignificant beligimist
From a border village: my inspiration.

Francis Bacon

I sat in the outdoor seating area of the art gallery
Like an alibi, my Jung

Stacked high, my pen
In the sky fingering the moon: soon

No in fact NOW I'll be exposing myself
To the reader inadvertently

Overtly. My books
Won't squeeze in my tote. The moon is like a route

To where these passersby could never go.
The writing, at times, goes slow.

But I know I could change everything
As that other delusional artist

On instagram said. I said
What I said about the peasants—what of it? Existential dread. Francis Bacon. No not that one the painting one instead.

Go Fish

I *think*
It may have started in academia…? what with all the
Relativism
Over the past hundred years…?

No I'm not a fucking Nazi. Fuck sake.

Huff—Only Because I Must Give Titles

I'm singular and symbiotic. I'm not psychotic
But I've got it. But I'm running out.
But I've got clout. But I'm mixing myself

Up with intellectual nouns
Disconnected and fluid conceptually. Every part of me.
And now this here

And now this there. I should really have a diary
Or somewhere
To share the ones and zeros of my catastrophe.

I don't know what this is
And what *is* this or what I am losing
In the working of the room and the notebook exclusive.

In conclusion, frankly
Tanked. Davely sank.

Autocorrect Knew Before I Did

I can't remember I can't remember I can't remember!
Will they test me? And then moments

In the grass. Da dummies don't doe.
Dey dar dick.
Dey don't doe dike di do.
Sneak speak doe dey don't doe.

(Would it be "dnow"? The matters
They do not concern themselves with) while I'm

Over my head, above myself,
Thinking of France,

Prancing between mois. Seasons.
Reasons? Di dought dit!

Brendan Gleeson? *Frank* Gleason, more like:
They all came back round!

Meteora

I walk in the pub and shout,
"Psychosexual!" A manic
Pixie doll starts to say, "Hey, Dadd-"
I walk out. I walk in the next

Pub and shout, “Psychosexual!”
A professor starts to say, “I have
An essay on tha-” I walk out. What
Do I want? I run along

Thinking beside it: one
Of my drafts. A woman
Smiles at my great legs. Two children smile
At my great legs. I am honestly dead and I

Let it all out to find… confide
In my poetry to find out. I scare myself
There is no doubt: I am missing
Out

On myself, I decide: I go to find
The professor: she has got another
Deadline. I, too, write another
Poem instead. *The very worst part of you…*

I reach the poetry and you reach
The poetry. The paper
Is beneath me. The pixie, professor,
Woman and children

Run alongside me. We all
Live together here now forever
In fantasy. I then remember
How this cannot be

Me. A man was smiling
Too, sorry—on a cycle
On the wrong path. In
The library beside the pub, violence

Begins *because* of safe spaces, I now
Overhear, even from all the way up here.
The echoes from my shouts
Disappear. No one will confirm what I heard.

You think you won, and then it’s all gone…

Mamma Mia!

I go back to school and blow myself up
I go to the cop shop to record my VRI and blow myself up
I blow myself up when I’m purposely scolded in the bath
I blow myself up when I’m raped and they laugh and question the rhythm

Mamma mia! I play my game
Thank fuck there were less disorders back then
I couldn’t fake being sane if I’d have bought one
I’d take more blame and hold the pain and it’d be a right mess

OK now I am singlehandedly defunding big pharma
I'm doing a Dharma; he's as handsome as Dahmer
I regurgitate her karma, oh no
Why? She was always looking at me

OK now I am on the ceiling; not really: I'm on the balcony
Wherefore art thou, Luigi?

Creative Non-Fiction

"Darkly Comic
Moments such as pointing out the plant pot masturbation note or reflecting on a teacher's tweet about men crying add a layer of absurdity, softening the heaviness while exposing deeper societal critiques."
—one of ChatGPT's comments about this piece

I applied for a creative writing masters at a red brick university as that is what I thought I should do. I was interviewed based on the quality of my work but one of the interviewers laughed at me because I didn't know that the piece I had written and submitted to them was called a "monologue". I was sweating in the interview. My personal statement had been quite something. Delusional.

She said I needed to go to workshops and read contemporary fiction. I was dating a lot at the time and within five minutes on one date the woman said, "I want you to come to mine and fuck me." We had a few more cocktails before biking to hers and we had sex four times and it was disgusting. We discussed Mary Oliver in the morning and had sex again and then I was staring at the tree outside whilst telling her about something traumatic that had happened to me during my childhood when she started masturbating. I started playing with her hair. I sent her a photo of the poetry anthology *Staying Alive* the next day and she didn't reply. I enrolled on a creative writing night course at the university as I wasn't offered a place on the masters course. The interviewer who laughed at me was teaching it. We studied *Shuggie Bain* and *Normal People*. The teacher said, "All men need to start feeling uncomfortable," during one session about something. I found her on Twitter and she shared a lot of posts about men being "gross" on trains. After the fourth session she emailed me saying she was really impressed by my contributions in the class and she was glad I'd signed up. During another session she joked that writing books was her way of avoiding therapy. During the last session she projected a mind map onto the board for the novel she was currently planning. In the bottom corner of the map was a small note about one scene: "man masturbates into plant pot". I saw this and burst out laughing and pointed it out and said that I wished we'd been shown this type of thing in the first session. She covered the corner. I was working at the university at the time and one of my colleagues joked about how she wanted to watch men cry over and over. I found out she'd been raped not too long before. I really wasn't in a great place during this time either as I was not long out of a really difficult relationship and I was trying to change my life. In fact, I was feeling murderous a lot of the time: I was slowly acknowledging how much my dad didn't love me—how completely vacant he was—despite his physical presence. And to be honest I'm still squaring other things in relation to him. My line manager at that time used the phrase "man up" about something and I laughed and told her off and she apologised. I wasn't that bothered really; we got on really well and had this silent understanding and I really valued how she left me to do my work and respected that the job was not that high of a priority in my life. My line manager before that told me her mother tried to drown her in the bath. My line manager before that told me about her husband's difficult upbringing. She hardly acknowledged me for the rest of the time I was in that role after that: I tend to only take on short term

assignments. On Twitter, the interviewer/teacher shared a photo of herself next to the Orwell statue outside the BBC.

Practice

My days are forever. I'm beyond the ceiling.
I'm Icarusing. I'll be peeling next week.
I'm Cliftoning. I was Kaufmaning and then I'll be Tony
Cliftoning. I'll be Clinton Morrisoning. I'm Bill
Clintoning. I'll be Hillary Clintoning. I'm Swanking for now.
I'm Toni Morrisoning forever. I'm a Billy goat. I'll be in the gully. I'll be on the bridge. I'll never
ever finish. I'll be in the fridge taking a breather in a minute.
I'll forever be a pretender of a pretender except when I'm not. I'll be presidential.
I'll be free. I'm free. I'm skirting the rays. I'm pizzagate.
I'm not pizzagate. I'm afraid. I'm scathed. I'll be scythed.
I'll come back to life. I'll go under the knife and go alt-right.
I'll go left-field. I'm running through too many fields. I'll U-turn.
I'll learn from the burn and fall but not much and aloe vera.

Fleshing Out

I'm outwardly Zarathustraing, while I live
Lacklustre. I muster
The courage to share nonsense
For reasons I don't even get

While my being balances
Rope dancers quietly. The fuck
Am I even saying: I am here again
Now just filling the stanzas

Not going near anything, hoping
You interpret some meaning
From it that probably isn't even there. I'm lying

In bed fleshing out the noise
To sense god, even
A little bit; which delays and delays it.

Honestly? Fine

My ex's nickname when she was younger was the "Child Catcher".
I wished I'd have known that before I'd matched with her.
She's flew to her homeland now to be with her father.
There should really be an Electra complex.

My poetry means no one is ever going to sleep with me ever again: I'm
Throwing about unsettling earthly sins. But will this get me into heaven?
I'm guessing heaven would feel like crawling back inside a womb. Heavenly.
O not again.

I Beckett above the mechanisms without doing too much experimentally.
Mentally, I am forgetting all of history.

After a while the poetry does not really cut it, does it, as it gets real.
I cannot live in fantasy outside the stanzas much longer—I will keep leaving the zoids wandering here from out of my head.

Heaven is a place where they'll be no sex, surely.
I reckon they'd have to be no looking, poetry, nor parents either.

Could They?

Well I was getting… No!
I can't even say "confused" now
About back then but I am now. Anyway, I couldn't sit
Long enough—plan long enough—
To separate my life
And what all my kids wanted me to do
From my urge to… build
A building, so I just mixed everyone I'd known
Into the cement. The cracks and that. They don't speak to me anymore.
O that's completely unconnected.
Yes that is a brick tied to each of my wrists
And ankles. Yes that is a window on my forehead.
Actually, is it a wall today? It is? Liars! I haven't even had *one* child! D'you think I'd have their offspring?
Though… could they make a good back porch?

Nah

The run off
Run off and be found fishing
Only a little further upstream
If they still be talking like something: better that

Than being poked with a stick
At the bottom, barely an extra—a taxonomist's
Reference point… Wait:
Maybe they will be famous? O what

Route to take in life, Grady; cuz I sees…
I see how we all do
Contribute to the rive- nah:
The *shower* of it! That's what

I be thinking; and I don'ts care
'Bout thems poking 'round here, s'long they don't stay around with thems weird books *theys* need to stop *them* doing all *thems* funny business, cuz yur sistur be a damn good prize: I's even knows that.

Pointed

Both the problem and the great opportunity
Is to be found, not
In it being "over there". And I don't want you to start
"Signifying" and what not. Fine—"abstract".

You can say it's an abstract piece. Place! Freudian?
Smeudian. Both
Are (sigh) to be found
In it being pointed at as over there: while that
Is going on, you'll
Be here—paying me, in love or baffled;
Always battling some… inclination.
And I'll be sitting across from you
Cooling you with this… what is it—"paperwork"?
Yes to be clear, the great opportunity's for me.

Yeah, Kind of Happens When You Haven't Got Any Skin

It's the kind of post I'd like to post
To please the other ghosts: I know it—still

Couldn't help myself. Aren't helping myself.
Now I could be anyone: shit!

Fuck! Could I write like that? Fuck
Man—I better think carefully

About nah; over there
Is something I am not and never could be—

No way. I'm great, me. Can be many things
To many people. There's eight billion poems

In me—you just have to open your heart
Like he has, Casper. Switch your register

Now and then! You are O.
K. Why the fuck were you talking to him?

On the Seesaw

It's like a playground for people putting stuff off? Huh—
Seems right formal. Or at least

It did: I brought my mate Gaz
From the… Gerrymander Inn, and he's shat

In the corner of the sandpit. There's no sandpit? Shit.
Weirdly there's no Gerrymander Inn either; and Gaz

Hasn't done that *publicly*
In years. *Privately* though? Not my problem, despite…

Yeah exactly the playground. And yeah it
Does, only it's hard to point at. Though aren't they cute

On the seesaw.

Serving

We travelled through perpetual irony? unnoticed
Until we had a hangover
And had a hangover. Man, to still know what we knew
They never ever knew. Must

Suck. And now we are here
Having to teach them what we found
We knew about ourselves
When we broke through the cloud

To live back with what we knew we always knew
We would teach them from here
Knowing now in this new cloud, knowing some will never make it:
The people we have left—we found we were right: they must stay

In their constructions; while our recreation—the work some
Of us knew we always know—has started for our children.

Formula Gee

This engine has been running… Excuse me—
The engine has been running
For as long as I can remember, plus a little further, we assume. It started spurting out
Those little furthers, plus the mangled
Parts of things it made others do to the chassis, but now

Something weird is happening: other
Quirks happen when I press all the buttons
On the dash to get odd signage; it feeds back into the engine—
It floods and drives itself mad. Mad
To sit in. Anyway now I've no idea

What it's doing. It's still on the track? I wanted to be a boiler engineer
When I was younger. I liked it when the bus
Bumped and the hairdresser…
See! Why does it do that? But I haven't the tools yet! Just.

Self-Awareness

No risk of fire, no fire alarm system.

Teams Channel

You were asleep and now you're awake and death is just *there*: right—
Any other com…
One sec I'm just writing that down actually… OK! "Death

Is *just* there". "…just *there*", then. Any other comments
Before we close the meeting? As I need to get
To another appointment, "need" being

Relative now (finally). Nothing! Fine ignore me—I've been making it up
On feel
As I go along. Imagine it: this whole

Industry on feel. Even these daily meetings.
The skills checklists. The audit trail.
Even your comments, in fact: all on feel

Yet automated! Until now! Tina—you *are* awake!
And you *are* dying! And the work's *still* nauseating!
So why talk about it! I mean for goodness' sake, Tina—

We've all been there. I even kept the stacks
Of comments once. Once! Now? I just… I just…
Sorry that was extremely unprofessional of me—I shouldn't have said anything: Welcome,
Tina. That part dies.

Lunatic Outside Food Giant

Yo just came to tell you about all the little things
Going on all around you that I'm sure you're missing: glad

You've picked me up? Well it's what I'm here for!
Someone's gotta do it! Someone's got to sacrifice themselves!

Light
On things, like I've just flicked a switch. A cloud

Like an albatross. O it's nothing: something it my eye.
It was years ago! OK that's enough I don't want to stretch you too far in one go.

To Be Fair I Was the Same

Now what are *these* ones doing
Out the corner of my eye? Plump! Phnarg!
Glad I'm not like them
Either. And oof: that line! I wonder

If this will still be relevant
In five years time when I publish it. *More* so?! Purd!—
Probably.

Sorry absolute *nightmare*
Getting here. Have you ordered? I'll have the same.
How do I look? How do I sound? Good—I'm
Calming. You're such a calming

Presence for me: that's why!
And how're the boys? Mmm.
Mmmmmmmmmmmmmm. To be fair I was the same.

Confessions of a Vampire

Hi yeah so I'm a vampire. Erm—
Not sure what else to say really; most
Know who I am
Unless they too are a vampire. There's also

Those that say, "O yeah—
Vampires," or, "And everyone's got experience
With those vampires." And we know
These themselves can be vampires

A lot of the time. Erm—what else; it's not
A blood thing. You knew that. Sometimes
They just give it away without even noticing? Themselves, I mean—

Not blood. Most do in one way or another: I don't mind saying—
It gets lonely. Maybe I'm changing. Yeah it's improved; seen
It next week though? Nah just… my soil? I'll show you some time.

More Poetry

"Egoless insouciance!!! =D"

Screaming

Wait… what if they notice
I'm a neurotic psychopath? "💫"

Pattern Language

The stars, lying again
To the damned,
All dumb to emergence. This telescope.
These paper weights. My love

Might die without the stress: best
I name one after her. To lift a hand
For these flights. What can engineers know—
Modelling? Telescopes? Weight?

Rockets; but can they reach them? Glance
Like this like…
Like I can't tell you. Like I can't say why.
Like I can't tell her

While I'm counting them: Pavo, Virgo,
Cancer, Taurus, Antlia.

In My Book

It's all the wires going about all over the place which make it impossible
To move the roof tiles. It's too delicate—what if I cut one?

I wish I'd never started this job; guessing
Gets you so far. Short bursts of instruction

I apply to the panelling. I don't even know if what I'm doing
Appears credible. I've got these overalls. I keep using the same three
Or four tools, yet they gave me, like, hundreds.
Thousands! I only use the fourth one as a hammer too!

I didn't say that; I know what I'm doing. I'm just saying
It's complicated. Perhaps I implied more? Aren't
These morning check-ins for this? Fucking hell—we cross

One or two: hardly matters; I undo them, use
The hammer one in a near enough identical one
To the others and that's another day ticked off in my book.

Unabashed

Opaque was the mirror
Obviously pretending to whine

Like an painter's easel opening
Really slowly

To wind the painter up, the muse
Always knowing what she was doing. It was a familiar

But ever confusing scene
For the painter. And then they had the visiting

Critic? No—there *had* been
A visiting critic; the diaries also mention

A mysterious fourth figure
In the room, holding the palette, watching

The muse
Watching the painter, the critic

Found out. Semi-trained
In some kind of analysis

According to their own doodles, the artist
And muse—delicately

Though conclusively—decided to break
Their working relationship: "For what good

Was it doing for-" the script's
Then blurry; they

Burned the canvases
After the fruitful ones, the critic

Hypothesised
The figure said

Before disappearing, they told us to say. Hope you enjoyed the tour;
This store

Has gifts. The cafe, cake.

As You Walk It

The route to kitchen assembles with thirst; and my Blake
Deflates as the urge
Bursts deep and upends me to look outside
To find relief in category

Palatably with the times instead; which aligns
With my rising from the sofa
For the kettle, ignoring all the darkness
Brewing to ruin my appetite

For getting it always right; as my friends
Arrive: I must now abide with m-
Me? But no! For they are anti-religious

To the point of bigotr-

No! Again! What?!

How do I abide as anything at all
In this world, let alone
With th-

O bread. That's better.

This Poem Ain't About You

Like I said, I've had it hard
Best we forget
I run through Coventry War Memorial Park
Somebody put the start

In the wrong order: it took me a while to warm up
I run through Hillfields
Someone shouts from a window, "Gay!"
I don't know what else to say: "OK"

"Was *this* the moment
Ashley Dunn came out to us all?": a chapter
In my biography will end like this
Ashley and Me: you can't use that now (I've had that saved)

I begin to takeoff

Steadily as you begin to revel
In my run
I run past Frank Whittle, The Flying Standard

Cuckoo Lane, St Michael
Slaying the devil
Anything you can do
I can pastiche and do it better

I'll stare at your daughter
I mean, I'm reading *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
I mean I'm drafting someone
I mean the sculptor

Of *St Michael's Victory over the Devil*
Used his daughter's husband—Freud
The Lucian one—as a model
"Betfred: still this way ->" is the only sign on display (I wish

I'd taken a photo) through the works
I walked myself between last night
To see what I'd find and what I'd recognise
The place needs to be a bomb site again

I'm sorry. It just does. There's no other way of putting it
Nothing has cut it here since I fingered someone there and someone else there
I've just ran past Tom Clarke
He's still 'Had Enough'

I'm calling his bluff
He ain't from Coventry but Castle Bromwich
I ain't from Cov either, but Bedworth
I can't go near there

If I go near there it'd be a whole different poem: my school friend
Stabbed her boyfriend once
He's now in prison because he killed someone else
That's all I'm saying (I'll try

Again later) Neville Staples!
He had the right idea: he pluralised himself!
I also did when I moved south
I didn't plan to

"Better think of your future" I am!
I'm running to make it
Past the library. The site of the old Locarno! The Coliseum
I mean the Kasbah. The ruins of Scholars!

I was Whittle, Clarke, Cuckoo
Lucia Joyce incarnate
In Scholars. I'd down three bottles of Lambrini. I wasn't even bothered
I'd land a few days later and wonder what I'd done

What I'd said
I was in over my head for some time
Then I'd forget about it
Not Terry Hall though! He struggled to

'Too Much Too Young'. Me too
I switch channels and listen to another song
I pass the canal basin
The transport museum

Both absolutely dreadful. Vile
Should I circle back to the park? Through everything?
The Wave Waterpark. The Weaver's House
The Aardvark HA I was a mess in there too

'Too Much Too Young'. Me too
I switch channels and listen to another song
Because I'm not really going to descend
The poem into something like that again

Because it goes on its own. It really does
I look at the map
There's nothing else significant to stop at
Instead, I go for breakfast

At a cafe
Some regulars are laughing about a "transvestite convention"
But what do they know?
Did they even really witness the sights they've seen? No

They're screaming in a hellhole
Like lunatics. Let's leave them to it. Let's moan at their votes later
"Nothing, like something, happens anywhere."
They can't take-off themselves: it's too late

It brings a tear to my eye. And I was only here to take the piss!
I miss absolutely nothing
"You're living in an incestuous world
Where you're conscious holds no weight"

I'm back on the train instead
I'm back to pretending I'm gay, insane, a plane
You
The sculptor

Picked Wynne Godley as the model for the angel in the end
"Settled. And in this mirage lived his dreams,
The friendly bully, saint, or lovely chum
According to his moods."

Three Seasonings

Soup again?! I cannot bear it—
Not since I've spoken like this! What is it? Why

Does I got it… Eh?! Excuse me.
Why am I being served again? Last

Week?! But that was
Last week! Fine my recovery is now impeccable

As you'll know. As you can tell.
OK—how *far* though? Even I'm

Intrigued. Open. All the way?! O that's
Fine too; you braggart. You nit.

Wanker. Right in I go then, floating
On top, as usual, not touching

Any of the cool sides
On the so-called outsi-

That's right: the spoons always go for!
But still I can hear them—urgh; my bread

And butter against their salt
And pepper—seasoning seasoning

Seasoning, yes: that'll do it.

So To Speak

Here are all the consequences
Of what I'm not telling you about, God
Having died—didn't half have a queue—an odd
And open confession booth. Actually it's not even a booth
Most of the time—like
Pure LEGO found on the side of the road
Stopping the traveller, one of those
Car rugs for kids
To play with them on, all ten blocks
Offering enough combinations to distract them for a bit…

Goes down quick, doesn't it! Erm—I once
Excessively hubrised my shame
And jumped the queue. And questioned God; I'm not sure now
To be honest: stupid block! And expected more from you.

It Was Cheap

What you were waiting for broke and then there was no far off island, not that you didn't
book trips

Periodically for a while like jumping on your shadow
You guessed it: like a child. Perhaps it shouldn't

Sound like that; but how do you know
What they sent me for? I also wanted a uniform: they stripped me
Of anything to do with myself? Paradoxical;

Again—maybe you don't know, at least yet. I'm not fed up just…
Keeps me busy, I suppose. Not having to be careful
With what I read. Swallow. Now that I'm *really*

Not me too, I can ignore all the artisans
Without even being noticed or rude: I still wear
A watch, but no more so than any other I wear——

These are the kind of curveballs
They make me throw. O fine then: I booked Magaluf. It was cheap!

Off Again

Who're we reductively piling on next? Because I want an award-winning
Construction? Reconstruction? Deconstruction? I just really fancy binge watching
something to be honest!
No I don't want them being given any instruction: that's gay.
I mean! That's icky.

OK let's take the piss again now instead: haha—
"Make your bed"? Cringe.
For fuck sake: you never make the bed!
Poverty and class haha what?

What?
What?
Can't be bothered. Nah not talking about it anymore.
My friend at uni was poor. Yeah. Yeah she once held a pork chop.

Shut up! What?
Awful. Just awful. Lmao! Some of them don't even shower!

Funderworld

The mirrored perversion looks smug, thinks we leave
In failure: we bang the drum
Bad back out through the forest
To protect his facade. I put my arms out really far

So as not to absorb any kind of beat
It accidentally makes, because I don't want him following me
With his poems and punctured soul. "Punctuation
More like!" bellowed through the trees;

I'd wrote it on the hymn sheet with "This is not
Ambiguous or metaphor. This is you. Don't read it."

‘Punctuation!’ again from the trees. Faint sighs,

Screams—and as I knew he’d read it, I’d written “Little dip
In No-” “‘Little dip in November’ at the top
Of the next page? But it’s May! Sooooo glad he left.”

Wish I Wasn’t

I cannot imagine I’d be one of the river. Awkward? And the rest!
Because I sit by it
Wearing my bib
Catching what the world catches more
Getting lazy
To cover the raft I just dip around the edge—
Just dribble around the rest of the floating drips—
Like euphorbia milii. It’s like an affliction.

No—I meant that like a synonym.
Which explains
Why I cannot be one of the river
(Or a psychopomp, oddly; or one of their students).
It’s the simple ones doing the most work.
Or silent? Wish I wasn’t a witch.

Twinge O’ ‘Wareness

The ungraspable; and how they can’t grasp it! And so
How I’ve still work to do! *We’ve*
Work to do
Thanklessly
For them
Forever, still. Forever
Thanklessly I mean—the burden
We paper over

For their sake: they can only climb
These walls unsure: ha! Bless.
Keep giving it a go! I’ve all of
Time to stop redirecting
My burden. No you’re confused: it can never sto-
What do you mean you’ll just read something els-

Ignore That

You always knew it was wrong. Wrong answer!
Doesn’t matter: anything
Other than a laugh is wrong
In my new book. See you later!

Sorry about that tone earlier: I…
I was probably
Projecting; only I was in the pocket
With that po- Exactly! Which means it works

Again and again
Until it doesn't need to anymore. Whatever *was* language
Before anyway? If a tree
Needs an excuse in a forest

Would it just keep growing trees
Not really feeling it? Really? Makes at least two of us.

O! Ignore that, actually—ha.

I Needed to Be It

"In the middle of their metamorphosis, not quite through with their journey"
—Travis Scott, 'Pornography'

The dead are dead
Like the fine are fine: sure——if you ever
Need to talk,
There's always your whacky poetry friend!

When I forgot myself and told them, I became
Someone I did not need to be again
For longer than I needed to be it, as if
I was writing my own poem; so maybe

Like everyone should, you are finally
Finding your voice! Yeah!—everyone *is*
Creative! Erm that feeling
Hangs around; it's the one

They don't acknowledge, the dead—the so-called
"Fine". But if you ever…

Title Poem

I've been having some problems.
I'd like to share them with you.
You don't even have
To listen; I know…
OK it's just enough

That you're here—that we're all

Here, getting through, trying our best. I can't do that today though: it's been tough. But
Even with this
Small act, I feel… I don't know. I feel
Somehow alleviated of it.

What We Must Create

Something has got to come good.
I guess it's going to have to be me.

I've turned another corner, I guess,
And given up on them. Not given up—
It's loving. I think if I just do it with a spring in my step

I could really change something, myself
To the side, these pools of light
Being mocked not doing enough.
Am I doing enough? I can say it
But not consider it. Never being sure
With an undertone of knowing—
The poet knows: this—some result
Of some century—is what I stress

Over, bringing you along with.
Is that too overt to be anything other than patronising? I spend a lot
Of time feeling like I'm banging my head
Exactly, saying the same thing
About this monstrous modernity
I'm contributing to in different ways. I walk
And take photos of—from—all kinds of places
Alleyways of difficulty
Really high places, the same world
Circled and captured. Do the people…

Do you out there see it, what we must create?
I want something for you to remember me by.
Need I repeat our burden?

Vouliagmeni

The sink, the garbage disposal unit
Shredding up all the food waste, the tap
Flowing out like it's been corrected, the handsome plumber
With our moment, the sinkhole, the collapse

On the sofa after all the washing up
And shredding of food waste: when
Are they going to see how I'm not valued.
I read my lines out to the plumber—the show

Always felt so close and then suddenly
It *was* so close. "You project well." That's what he said.
Like he would know! He did something with the pipes; but
It's awful

What he suggests and never knows.
I've let the leftovers languish
For years. They grow mould, connective tissue
Between themselves. When I say "collapse", I was resting atop.

True Detective

Like a nectar fuelling the Tower of Babel, there is
A nectar fuelling the Tower of Babel,
Which doesn't mean it doesn't fuel the village
Spelling bee, just as it fuels the Linguistics

Department's reference back to itself. It does mean
The nectar sometimes loses itself, which is fair enough,
Only it isn't enough: a steady rate. Rumours
Circulate that it replaces itself; which…

Nightmare. Beats starting again though: some workers
Just… falloff, I suppose. I asked the new cultural outcrop
ChatGPT to rephrase what you expect me to do about it:
"Observe: what actionable intervention, precisely—within the limits of my agency, and given
the prevailing conditions—do you envisage me undertaking in response to this?"
The only way out

Is through some grandeur until the foundations
Are in the clouds themselves, one reckons, turning amber.

Not a Didactic Banker

I am *not* a didactic banker!
How many memes have I got to like!

It's easy to fall into that trap
Without even noticing, believing
Your actions aside from this lifestyle—the *position*
Of saving
Bonds something something—can occur
In a vacuum. But let me just scan…
We're good. This time! I'd recommend
Always checking, only not too much; I fast

On Thursdays and just play with it to see what'll happen to the stocks: rarely
Anything different—more of this marvellous
Experience between the swathes
Of staring at monitors
For days. Well, I'd counter that it's good for profits, wouldn't you?

I'm an investment banker. Mergers
And acquisitions to assist with raising
Capital. How else can I say it?
Let me put it another way:

You have someone in your life that you are better than—you know this;
It's hypothetical right now, but you have
That intuition, am I right? We

Help you grow
Away from them *indirectly*. Doesn't matter—we're better than them, remember?

Because it isn't didactic!
And then I do this and then I do that
Like an alchemist: it's been said! And then you can do it
On your own! You won't even need us!
But I'm… I'm Nigel? Surely you…
But I *mad*e you!

B-Side

It's *irony*. We aren't getting funding, you know: that's
For them. Official. One comes through but he's different
And visceral. His story! Read his fourth
Through to eleventh collection where he dissects it

In different ways open-endedly. There's different mythological
Lenses. Blazes. And then in the tenth? He dismantles
The very tools of the academy *itself*
Whilst retaining the use of its structural markers of intelligence

To recreate the myths in erasure
Whilst dragging his intelligence back into view. It's *very* clever.
I reread it for years. There's an upside down reading.
We sit on the ceiling upside down reading it.

Of course we don't! What do you think this is, some
Academic experimentation? We're builders! Where would the world be without us!
Isn't something you can turn on and off
Except when it does just go off

And I'm left walking around wearing a helmet, because
You never know when a construction site
Could appear. You'd have to get your eye in though.
Sometimes I do it with it on though. God it doesn't always have to be

Serious! I'm always carrying this clipboard; I don't mind!
We aren't Ickyrush all the time, you know! I even went to a broth-
Eh? Sure! I-C-K-Y-R-U-S-H. No worries! Though…
Well…

It's the community of it
That's the most important thing. And considering everything.
And letting people make their *own* minds up.
I just think it's too subjective to even be competitive? The bios

Get really long. I sometimes read them out at work
To practice. Do I work in the arts? *God* no—
Construction! These are my different hats. I can be absolutely anything
All the time doing whatever I want

Thought it was going to save me, but it didn't—doesn't.
Just move on while you can, kid. I'm no idiot: I'm wearing the helmet,
Holding the clipboard today
On campus as my *other* self—sure. But it's also a warning: I really did nearly reread for

years.

Tony's Unit

I don't want to consider it too much: let this room
Be my reading, this reading my room
And so *the* room. *The* reading.
It'll stay between me and my myopics
And a few clients, because I'm always training.
Am I speaking too much between the pieces? I'd rather ask
Than you go away
Thinking other things. Where was I—
Let me just put these things back on. A sensation
To then stretch sight—written a while ago—
Like a parent with a cough
We hope reaches us
And doesn't reach us both, understanding
Expanding Lynchingly, in ways
We cannot say
As the days never make way
For the haze of explanation that should be delayed; something
I'm playing with. Specs off. I should have gone!
Such a generous slot! Empty sets.
Empty *seats* sorry: different assignment. Night school. The odium
Of these podiums the shadow boxer
Never feels—they, "Cannot deal!"
They say. But just look at the life they are missing in here! The artwork. The installations.
The insulation: Tony's
Done a marvellous job on the unit. Can we all thank Tony?
A different Tony, of course. Imagine!
Many of my clients comment on the warmth; I dread
To think what it's like for the boxers
Training after us. Doing proper work! Uss uss!
Maybe they open a window though.

The Acceptance Speech

As you'll well know, I scored a free throw
When I'd just turned six. I was tall for my age.
I used to feel it was a disadvantage. but then
I started celebrating it. I still celebrate it! I watched

The other kids being lifted
By their parents to the basket, confused,
Jealous of them. I suddenly had to do something.
One day I walked into the sports hall and grabbed the ball

For the first time. And I promise
That I stood behind the line. To this day. And I had a go.
And it went in. I was stunned. Dazed
For years. No one was there but I had a grainy

Video of the shot, only I'd cut my feet off. The few

Friends I showed it to early on were indifferent.
The vision of me taking the shot had come to me in the shower, by the way.
I quickly began to see how all sport

Was either about healing, or critique. In some cases
It can be both, but a lot of the time, athletes
Are paying the price in the long term. Anyway then
There was the whole 'The Acceptance Speech' saga

That sampled my video: you'll be aware
Of this too, else what are you even doing here. I'd posted
The video online not thinking anything of it. The saga,
As awful as it was, seemed to be the necessary component

Which allowed the real worth of my free throw to shine, my new
Friends in the laboratory explained. My partner—a
Senior research professional in that lab—attests.
So thirty years later and there I was, struggling

To make sense of what I'd do, and then I was writing *this* speech, not
Out of arrogance, but having honed
My throwing arm, I could sense
The honours that would be coming

My way in another two years. And I was right by the looks of it; my husband's
Brother—here beside me—attests. What I think this award
Is *more* for though is the work
I have done in that time to demonstrate that healing

And critique—their resulting progress—can mix with intuition, public service,
The political; and that private ceremony—saga! if I may
Incorporate that, despite its workings
Being banned from these ceremonies—*can* prove

Many old friends wrong: they were young—Billy,
Just five. But can we take a moment to imagine how he feels
Now, about the 'Good Train Foundation', formerly
The 'Good Good Good Good Good Good Good Good Good

Train Foundation': it's… going great! O stop. Please! Thank you.
We have worked so hard with it; after the 'Bus
I'm Driving and Throwing Everyone Under
That Tried Their Best With Me

As I Reverse Back Over Them' launch, it feels
So rewarding to see our faces—my husband's brother,
My nephew and me—on the side of the complex
Just over the road from us now. My parents

Not here today but in the garden of the complex
I'm told get a mention—OK; what else? The free throw!
Wah!—it's copyrighted! But there is an obstacle
Course that you can attempt

To complete between here and the complex: one
Lucky winner will see a decisecond of the recording
Once! All the rest of you will perish
Partly before you will be renewed with our new labs

Good Drink. If you don't drink it you *will*
Perish though. Regardless of the obstacle course:
You can't currently leave… I'm joking! But do you want to see more
Of me doing comedy? Then subscribe

By scanning the barcode of the pamphlet
That was on your seat! Ha!—it's so weird: I can *still*
Hear them chewing. Jen… Jenny Pickled? Is that..
Is that really you? How did you even get a ticket?!

OK so for context, I made sure
Everyone who is here today has never thought anything negative
About me ever. That means you
Haven't, Jenny? Gosh. And since… Just to check: you can't take the award

Away from me now? OK since they can't take it away from me
I can tell you, that Jenny
Was someone that I…. *Really* difficult, this. I'll be brave.
Jenny was one of the ones I locked outside

The sports hall on the day I took my free throw,
And she was raped while she waited for her parents in the rain. Give me a minute;
I was under no obligation to tell you all this, by the way.
I have been sending Jenny copies of any other free throws

I have successfully made since then. How many fre-
Five; so she was five free free throws she can do whatever she wants with now.
But… God. But this is the great conceit
Of 'The Acceptance Speech' saga, OK? Which is why

I'm surpris- Jenny! Don't… don't shoot!
Here—you can have the award. The complex! We'll call it
'The Pickled Complex'! O even the whole *foundation*; 'Not Great
Foundation' we'll call it. Just please don't shoo-

<u>Cheesy Varnish</u>

I've just had the loveliest conversation. I keep having them lately!
Each one makes me feel brand new
Like I'm being wiped of some form of goo.
All my friends from before? We're through!
I'm even forgetting all the facts I knew

From before, because none of us
Really have a clue. The conifers! Needle-like!
One can see everything from these heights.
There's further to go? Never! Really? No! What

If I fall? That wouldn't be very good at all
High up in this heather. Who would I call? These woods
Are getting fairly fucking tight, mate. Yes OK OK: Don't

Hesitate. But now I'm crawling. Perhaps it's fate? O chimeric
Stranger: we'll never ever make it back down to make it to work at this rate!

Menaechmi?!

You sheepishly walk back in… no! You walk
Out without an Orpheus; how they'll never
Appreciate you: to lose what's sacred! So…
I must vaguely remember this in ways

It only produces laughter in
Myself when I *am* appreciated—a new friend
For minutes: this isn't the outside
You expected to be walking into, is it.

But who was that closeted scholar? Dunno.
But you'll no longer be a panter for the defence!
And you accept all the bright, brilliant red, oddly
Wafting off as coolant for the cloudy beige

Ever emerging. Fine!—and blue. Senseless; a momentary
Look back, was that? What are you, huh—
Some kind of piper? I know it was *allegedly*
A lute. But that's the point! Come on, dude:

You're all uptight! Let's have some fu-
It turned out to be another phoney deconstructionist.
Can't be too careful! Those jingle-jangle
Fallacies will have you on the path, seeing

A rabbit, *insisting* it could be a duck, when
Really there could be no pat- I knew it! Excellent. I mean…
Like, whatever; that ring-bound thing
Is blasphemous. You better believe that still counts!

We know you call them "spirals"—I thought
You'd come back out here? Was that… was that a *burp*?
Did you just slip?! Menaechmi?! What the fuck are yo-
Clever! Very clever. As long as we ain't gotta watch it.

Am I

I oughta bang your head together. You tell me!
Nope—I can't tell you; I'm not
Giving you earache: this is flat. The paper I'm using!
God damn technicians—you clearly
Aren't sure either.

Has anything ever ever ever
Been as you expected, though? I throw
My voice. I even consciously make one up!
So maybe they don't need
A walk. Wh…
Why would it remind you of sitting on your hand?

Absolutely not: I'd rather shout
From the sand. Well *I* don't think I'm shouting;
I'm using *your* thoughts: boo!
Look just try to relax, stop kicking,
I'll stop punching and… see—thousands
Of you. The lake really is grotesque; though it bends

Down. Around. And there you are again!
What more proof do you need!
Not so bonkers after all, am I.

Keep Going

The flickering of the film
Now I enter the theatre alone
Between takes
That don't record as well, finally: take

On this—drop it again
Just a quickly: phew! And it *can*
Be funny. What was that—for me
The flickering of the film?

I was thinking about my loves; are you…
Are we seeing this wrong
Again, already? I know I'm not a star;
I'm glad I kept all this

To myself. There was opportunity
Too, in the theatre. The analytic lenses.
It's either for me or everyone.
I brought my own popcorn

And now I'm nauseous and can't eat a thing
Under these lights
Coming up and the violent air
Conditioning on these backseats: had she

Left me there? I didn't
Care
Whether she was there
Or not by this stage: I *thought* this.

Way More Than Half

It comes to you like a capsicum

Wiping the floor
Appearing to fix the heavens

After the farmer died
Who sowed the seed with the stealthiest of ploughs: it ain't snow, is it.
What is it? Rain
Showers. Seasons. Showers.
A shower of showers. The song
OMG like the li…

If you mention it every fucking time
It happens, he stops sending them. Jesus—
You know this by now!

Yet there is still some confusion
Over what this soil provides: a raised bed?
Weed! Is it weed?
Are these
Weeds? Well at least that *sounded* more like a plaster, we

Believe, me and the royal "we".
What do mean
They're the same
Thing? I was on about "you"!
And you'll… fill this bit in later
Through and through, the hole

Plugged. The farmer safe. Mysterious ways
Remain in tact, you
Pickling, though returning
Back
And back.

<u>O I'm Sure(!)</u>

The sleep pushes up daisies; they are not
Skin deep. It's heartwarming! Comedic.
No I mean you're just… you're naturally funny!
They read like someone
Researching daisies. A bit, yeah. Or maybe
They heard "Yeah". Look it's just
What I sense. I'm one person! Can you get
A second opinion? You know it could be stress.

And then you said this and they
Said this and then it happened: you were
A writer. Anything else? Right; not sure
All the uniforms matter
From every job you've had. But you wanted an editor!
O I'm sure it'll sell.

Joyce and Beckett Being Interviewed

What pun we had!
Hmm actually
Now you've asked, I've forgotten. It was that good!
O come on: there's no point asking her, is there.

Like He Was Your Mate

Adumbrating through life
Loudly, hand in hand
So he knew to flip to the side
When he fell. Couldn't not fall though.
Couldn't land. Sounded
Like he was in the pocket
On many topics, at times
For minutes. He was quite the century. A modern

I wouldn't say myth, but staple
Ready to catch, snag,
Come out in pairs
Every third press. Impressed
By everything, at times
For minutes, he was. It's quite the century.

Is There Only

The funding for your security
"Has been torn asunder," he said. "We
Lifeguards have been forced to buy
Children's armbands instead. I'm a boat!" This scene

Is offbeat. I put my toe
In and out, expecting
That first hit, just once. No—literally the first hit; not *like*
It. Well it never rea- Yes everything feels like falling; do you

Do that a lot? "And I'm a visual boat. And everything
Is my water. And everything is determined"
—I've changed my mind!—"about someone
By how they vote." Knew it; I realise

The children's ones are cheaper. Could you not just *be*
A boat though? I'm a boat. I've no floats. "But where's
The *passion*. The *climax*. The *wave*.
The *climax*." Or maybe I'm… not a boat? Is there only "torn asunder"?

Natural Satellite

Can also moon mean "drift",
"Fantasise": I've worked hard
Since arriving. O around two
Months now. Yes I also find it… egregious

The industry won't support
All these launches.

I remember every slight. Yes I do—every
Crescent (😉) that I wandered
Down (😊) that… slighted me. But I am not so
Slight anymore, am I. No; as I *recall*

Every rocket that flew
Because of me. How it's making me learn—become!—
Star stuff. Flowers; daffodils too. There's never enough of me!
For me, sorry. Should it be "for"? You're lucky we're doing form today.

Don't Let the Door Hit You

When the pathetic Martian
Gets to this conjunction
I kick harder
Off into space
But it's a different kind
Of space again where only we
Can sutra: they employ
One translator. Me, dur; though

The neolog… new words
Grow exponentially. I sit
On my own at lunch too—they make me: "We're just
Too lovely. 'Too too'!" Nah—I'm cool with this: they
Make themselves sick
Afterwards. And I've got a supply of earplugs.
Well I already have to read it! The sickness, yeah—
Some irony! Though I'm worried I've stomached the poisoning.

Darling

But surely you can see that one was written iron-
Doesn't matter.

I put our flowers
In the fire and nothing happened, such is

Your love. Above me, escaping
Us all

Except in the night, is you, beyond
Me too. I cannot remember which flowers—

Your blue ones. It'll have to be good enough;
I don't think it changes

What happened. The red ones; why you made
The bouquet

For the banquet, insisting
Everything was named—every bean: not everyone

Has beans, John.

O You Will

If I say it, I am…
Even better!—if *others*
Say it, I am it; and if I *make*
Others say it—

Not maliciously! But by merely giving them
My… true… self…?
Then I am it. These fucking rules the fucking *cowards*
I have to help.

This all occurs beyond the timing of any supposed self's
Self… whatever; so get used to feeling it
Wanting to hold a frown of yours
To take you down their track record later: I like

How this all sounds. It isn't watertight but what
Can be and you get a sense
Of the disorientation
You shouldn't be going to bed with. Or maybe it's you! You'll *really* feel disorientated if it's
you.

Time and Again

I turn out to the sea
Generously, trying
The ships with taut

Turning circles, politicians
As synonyms for self: the stern
Seems to drive them

Wild—their own: an aft-
Most propulsion, steer,
From before them—a back-

Ward tug: I've been towing
Mine into port
For a while, titanically,

Through the waves of brave
Time and again.

Cowing Crocs

I lie to get a spoonerism. The cock crows
And I do not notice. I'm proud

Never landing for years, crowing—
Life's a gas. A tick. I'll have her

And this, the dish. Protect the baby
Spoons floating around: Wasn't me, miss!
Snakes hiss and I like give no shits—
I'm flying! I'm never dying! Lying

Is for down and slipping through
The blue, the red, the dead,
The Two. I'll show you everything

Like I show you nothing. I say this,
I say that. I'm so good I make the crow blus-
Until it catches up, I'm returning. Burp! I bite again.

From the Bottom of Exhausted Wells

The prelude went over you, the rhapsody
Hits like a ton of brick shit-
Houses over centuries instead, psychosis,
They'd say; only you don't visit them: you recall,

From the bottom of the well,
The spoon-fed street dogs with
Permanent contracts: you walk alone
Ignoring the bucket piped down.

Takes a while to get
Your bearings—the echoes of
The cylindrical: round, fixed,
Up into the light

"Like a cliche," you can't help but say
To the crawlers: it ain't enough. "Obsequious."
That does it. It pains you to lie;
The act is an antonym to pain. How'd you leave

At this rate? You tap the stone
Built ages ago. Strangely familiar, the sounds—
Reverberations. "Reverberates. Am I…?
What's in the bucket and what's at the end of the rope?"

The bucket is empty. If it rained it'd fill
You hope? "Surely…" But the rope
When tugged remains taut. "Lucky!" You start climbing out
"Bye bye!" to the mice

That crawl facsimile. At the top are a great deal of holes
Bored into the close. "'Field,' no? I used to be a mouse…
I used to be a mouse…
I used to be a mouse, a dog—a nagging ram: I shovelled shite

Down everyone else's throats; now
I have my pot, and I stir it
Up and I fuck it down my well
And collect it in shock…" re-

Sounds through the land: the preludes…
The rhapsody… the pots and/or pans…
And the buckets
And the buckets

Something My Son Would Say

"I see a face
That is not me." That sounds
Extremely dangerous.
I'm bored already.

Within a slim volume there's a new self
Responding to the shelf
Of the fictions of before
From the time you hit

The floor. And I told you you would: you
Made me. This is working out far too well
For you, isn't it: someone
Is going to interpret you

As their shadow; whereas you
Have been nothing for me beyond a few fleeting seconds.
And now I'm the smart-arse.
I'm glad we're apart.

Par for the Course

We splinter
Like chips off the old block; I pick
The scab and make the cut
Visible again and get a book deal: the despair

Is ~~real~~ surreal. I can't think of anything
Else. I have fairway woods
For the range, and I can putt.
I could quite simply improve my straitjacket

If I wanted to, as I love double eagles. I am visibly stirred
By the… range
Of clubs at the… club. I hope I'm not suggesting anything.
Persimmon. Gloves

To reduce callouses, throws
The club. I nearly grin so I stab a stick in my eye.

The Lifeguards

Have you felt it all yet? The world
Is waiting for you
Like it always has.
Time fills a glass.
The stop is put on
And it's an hour: we turn it over
And wait longer, the sand
In the glass

Without sensation on anyone's hand—
Could you
Be sand? Beach? The lifeguards
Are vigilant
Of what you choose
This time round.

Lil Heavy!

You're walking around in half
Screwing up your face at me.
I wipe

My own across the pages: slightly
Better? But still avoid.
How do I become

A kiss—marry? By
Bending myself
To you? But that me

Is through. Or here as one.
And you
Don't have a clue, do you: this

Life—here now?
Will be the end of nothing.

Seconds

Is it you that is the here
Of yesterday's long for tomorrow,
For a break? Today
Is not too soon
For the breaking of what's not
Here yet. Do not repel this night.
Do not take it as anything other
Than the thought of there being

A sun. Fall over
Into the day of yourself, and you will find
What we need

Now is not a you that is
Inside the version you seek, but the version
You creep.

Howling

But you're a-not-yet-together,
Feeling around for bits,
Egoly trying shit,
Far away but on course because you have found it.
To being somewhere else
In the big wide world,
And ending at the wheel
Amongst squirrels, fortuitously,

With wounds like pavements. Weaves like platelets.
It's a way to move
Away from so much piercing noise, is this:
A kitchen knife around a table.
A running jacket on a chair.
Beams at hair.
You need to care

Enough to move beyond the cord—but that's all I'm giving you.
It's all we're given too.
You'll be blue. You'll move through.
Your mosaic will make itself true
In some warlike effort. You bet it'll hurt!
Are you not going berserk?! But then
There's the rodents collecting nuts to look at.

I Am a Strange Loop

I am a merchant again and I do not know it:
Regard me! This little child
Turned to itself to inherit this kingdom! For I have come
As several—we are on our knees!—

And I ask of you to receive this new truth
For a short time as it hits my mouth
As it hits my pen, and redirects ears
To fear; for I am, truly, punished

And punishing, sitting at the bottom of the stair
Coiling out of the manor of what was before myself
In some historical bother: I return
As little child—and the poetry of a child's kingdom

If need be!—to sort it out. I sail the waves
Of leaded seas as they are received
By us! I rejoin me to my voice
In much regret.

Progress

She kept dreaming of eels and
Had developed a right eye twitch and it took me
Three months this
Time to listen to myself.

This is what happens when you move south
And have a smooth mouth
That allows you to flout nonsense
To paper over the knowledge of what others are living with with-

Out knowing: I am always going
To these kinds of rivers. Do eels live in rivers?
She said they were everywhere and then
I was running my digits through her hair in my bed. I didn't care

Again about the fact that a spat was coming
In her synapses that was going to be bad. This
Here is one of the only ways I know
How to process it, if I read it back,

That is, and decipher what my twitching
Digits are saying to me. She didn't want
A daddy. That wasn't her bag. She wanted to tell me
Everything else though. "I don't need saving!" I hadn't asked and I didn't

Save her number. In fact I blocked her and considered the cumbersome habits
I tend to have instead. She didn't want a dad.
The eels were going to make her terribly sad. I'd
Read out some Sylvia Plath to her before I'd played with her strands—mad.

Opium

"In the fields: theories—
Painting strokes along the series. The Seine.
It'll leave one delirious! Maybe for *ages*!
In the grand scheme of things

Before god knows. Onwards!
Into the folds of a coat
Waiting for one's own moat
So I am not soaked in whatever someone else wrote."

The letter in advance to Porlock
Worked to break the vision of a severed heaven. Some forgotten interference
To the Moro reflex is hiccuping through the stanzas
Like a prescription. The sirens, given the speaker's megaphone—
The speaker given a title, the title given license—wobble
Around hysterically
In the mind's eye of the speaker, mind; how close
They are to the frozen central
Nervous system noting illumination

To make sense of another
Otherwise senseless that too draws the reptilian
Brain dripping down the ages, like an uncle
Whiling away the… stanzas in a Wendy house
They're bound to in circles
In the fields.

"Memories
Are hunting horns whose sound dies in the breeze"*

**from 'Cors de Chasse' ('Hunting Horns') by Guillaume Apollinaire*

Now and Then

The sun is always setting and rising
Because unsurprisingly I'm inspired.
It sets on stuff that's rough and shouldn't be
And rises again and shines on more and that's the next thing
That's dodgy. Universally unacceptable
I mean and always has been, even when we desperately
Needed something to eat in the not-even-yet-
Dinghy coming across the sea to a new country
Before they were so. It got us here but now it has to go: I don't
Dis- Wait. There must have been some kind of mistake: I'm
Afraid, always. You'll wait to wait
While I think about it. I'm thinking! I'm going to Spain.
It's lame—you're right. I can be the wrong kind of white
Now and then. Yeah to my dodgy uncle's holiday home in the sun again.

Epipelagic Zone

I wake up and my dreams leave
My face half loaded. It blows
When I think about it; I drink plenty of water
And then I sleep and then it loads

As the train rattles past
The window of my delusion
I'll use to get to a higher apartment,
And it's packed with sardines like my Dali

Dreams but I've stopped counting them.
It is fortunate that they live at the surface
Considering the title of this poem. They receive the most sunlight.
Do they need it? What happens if they don't get it?

They could fall into the hadopelagic zone
With the sea cucumbers, turrid snails,
Cutthroat eels. There's hardly any light and there's loads
Of pressure and it's a nightmare. The Terminator

Has been there though. He discovered Leonardo DiCaprio.
Above that is the abyssopelagic zone, from the Greek

For “bottomless”. There weren’t right.
Transparent and eyeless

Species live there in perpetual darkness. It means they do not waste energy
On developing and maintaining bright or complex patterns.
They mostly survive on marine snow. Ocean dandruff.
The bathypelagic zone is just above. The “deep” zone.

The female humpback anglerfish down there can eat prey bigger
Than itself. The males are way smaller than them.
They live far apart from each other in the deep sea.
The males use serrated apparatus to mate. They hardly

Need touch each other. We’ve captured this twice to be really sure.
What else is going on down there! More
Anglerfish. Much the same as the pressure in the abyss.
As above, so below. The mesopelagic zone

Is next and it is the best. The twilight zone. So much bioluminescence!
Bioluminescent lures are used by predators; pressure
And chemicals are used too. There’s one billion tons
Of fish here. Lanternfish make up most of the biomass

Of the phantom bottom that used to wreak havoc
With ships. The deep scattering layer. The brownsnout
Spookfish uses a mirror to gather light; the glasshead
Barreleye fish is the only other vertebrae to do this. Anyway back

To the floating seaweed and sharks. The epipelagic zone
Where the sardines live. The sun is on our faces.
When it isn’t we only need to dropdown a little
Bit and make marine snow. Sometimes when it’s really clear

It’s really bright, and I feel like algae not long afterwards.
I shower myself if this happens; only
2% of us live at this layer. It is almost featureless.
Rehydrated, it will feel like a dream, at worst—

And then we will hardly hear the carriages
From the top of our compartments
That reach into the hadal zones
Of the soft watches of the sky.

I Am the Resurrection

I’m coming again. It’s Easter Sunday.
She then puts her buns away.
“We need to have a serious

Discussion.” I knew
I’d been rushing my plans for us: brochures
For the Bahamas? I can hardly work! Turkey

Was no more realistic. And we'd only met
Just after Christmas. "That thing
You do

Down there: it's ridiculous. Jesus it is
Ridiculous! You're like a composer,
An orchestra, a lyricist

All in one! Only I'm pregnant.
Of course it's yours you cunt! Look,
This might be your chance—

Imagine: a son
From the prodigal so-" I
Left,

As we hadn't yet been to my apartment.

Snowball

I read this book
Then this book, then this book. I feel
Wrong, black,
Then like Daffy Duck in Hollywood*!

No one notices
Until it's time to be silent
While you finish your assignment
And stop buying everything. Until then

Swallow the roach! The snowball
You create to throw at someone else,
That comes back around

In the still warm breeze
Blowing through the pages of history
That you just can't preach.

**'Daffy Duck in Hollywood' is a poem by John Ashbery*

Starstream of the Decepticons

More and more and more
Keeps the shadow at the door, my son
Small,
My daughter taller.

She looks taller every time I see her.
She's shooting up. She's nearly as tall as him!
He's never really been that into them.
Prefers to play his games instead.

I was the same. My dad left me to it—ran,

Cycled on his own. How aimless
I was before I met their mother! Then I got it
Together enough to start buying my first action figures!

My Transformers are my favourite.
One of them cost me over $10,000.
I work in computing. I do it from home.
Well he's just never really been that into them

In the physical form. Prefers them online. I lived on the series though.
I have Action Men and G.I Joes
And Stretch Armstrongs too, including a Stretch
Serpent that scares me to this day. I can't bloody tell them

Enough about closing the doors
In this house. It really creates a draft. I tell her, "You're long
Bare neck reminds me of a giraffes!"
Which doesn't make her laugh. Watch me turn this one into an airplane!

We'll See

Everyone's life sounds like absolute shit—
Listen to them. They are not doing
What they want to do and they are saying exactly that and
Doing nothing about it. It is mesmeric—

It might as well be mesmeric. I am not even going to check
If that is the word I want to pick. I'm a poet
(Am I?)—does it matter? How stunted we all are
In some way. I won't like this in a few seconds

Or a day or sometime in the future. Will regret it.
Might as well do nothing
In case I fall on my face and don't look so obviously
Disingenuous lying about being kind and everyone being lovely.

She was a lawyer and she wanted to be a dancer but
She went safe. The training to be safe!

Necrophilia

I come in and out of my body
Like a necrophiliac
I want to come back,
But only if it'll stay put—

It's no use: it wants to walk off.
It wants to float off
Into the moon and stars; which leaves me
With a hard

Decision: I hover
Over myself,

And enter myself again
For the poem. The reader. It's reductive

Calling this necrophilia! When I really want to
Sublimate everything in the atmosphere.

Passing Over

We were round the back of Aldi
Eating out the bins, deciding
How to divvy out the scraps
They'd labelled us for din dins——

I changed my clothes
And went to Waitrose.

Wastemen

For the time being, Eliot
Will come back around

Being ironed out by Ezra Pound—Do we need
To ask the fishermen

The question
To return from our wounded heavens: It hurts, yeah?

Then who does it serve?

Go Home, Now, Stranger

'"Erd abwt 'im goin' on SparkNotes finkin'"
You're thick? He's interpreted 'The Watershed'

He reckons. Now he's poemed a moat
Around himself like a tiger at his own

Tea party. While we're at the windows watching him!
It's hilarious! Not only accessible—glaringly

Obvious: he's writing (sort of) off
His tits, deep in solipsism. Cut him loose

From his cloudy leash (unless…) and he'd
Be dangerous, the so-called horticulturalist. What is it

With these pests, playing out their forgery
In poetry? Might as well have a sticker on his head

Saying "STAY AWAY FROM ME!" And guess what?
Grant-funded: some hare-brained scheme.

Boom!

“Art won’t forgive life, no more than life will.”
—Frederick Seidel, ‘What One Must Contend With’

O for goodness sake: I can never find the time to get my first collection together lately
I still haven’t told you about all the poems I’ve had accepted in all the top magazines either
Simon Armitage wants to do an interview me as well
Only I’m yet to reply to him because I’ve been having too many orgies!

Women are climbing through the windows
It’s become the kind of show I can barely keep up with
OK I can. But I want to get my collection sorted!
My job has gone to shit—we’re probably severing ties

Because all my colleagues and all our customers just have sex with me instead!
I tried telling them I was worried about it impacting the quality of my poetry but they couldn’t
hear me through all the fucking
Some of them ain’t great—it’s difficult
I’m a cult!

I only get a few seconds here and there to tap these out and share them
The fucking has even meant me having to give up my poetry night. I’m a mess! My voice has
gone! Sometimes my lovers have to finish them! You wouldn’t believe how
obscenely good he is! And not just at writing! Sorry! Sorry! You’ll have to wait for
the collection! Because being with this poet is like being in heaven!

And Other Social Media Posts

“Art won’t forgive life, no more than life will.”
—Frederick Seidel, ‘What One Must Contend With’

Thank goodness
There’re all these bros

To tar… Sorry! I mean
It’s such

A *shame*
There’s all these bros to target; while I

Practice mindfulness 😊
But did you just ask

“Which bros?”? Huh.
Huh! You don’t *know*?!

Well…
Well it’s all… you know…

These *bros*!
That could really be dangerous.

Betamorphosis

When Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself
changed in his bed
Ever so slightly more into the thing he'd decided to be the day before. There were so many
ways
To say this, the viewers agonising over the category,
But you've got to start somewhere, and he didn't want to be… what: vermin? an insect? Who
cares!
He's writing other wings! Weirdos.

Collections Ago!

Fuck her—I dragged
My library into her room. I'd only taken one step inside when she told me to get out and take
it all with me, which was handy: her room
Was not a moon. I sat on a stack
Of books outside and waited. She came out

Just as I was about to lose interest. "What do you want?"
She said this! Pfft. "Well if we're going
To get anywhere, we need
To get rid of these together," I said. She stood there

Arms folded, a pen behind her ear, a solar
System of shelves in the background
Through the door the room

Expanding the forms
Changing her un-
Interested in hearing me o-

Overture

"Art won't forgive life, no more than life will."
—Frederick Seidel, 'What One Must Contend With'

How do you say it—"man-o-sphere"? Got it!
Because it's doing the rounds and I want no part of it!

O I knew about it, alright—was just making sure.
Because I've been thinking about it loads and loads and reading about it loads, so I just
wanted to be sure

So I could ensure I had no part in it. Not that I ever would!
Because the manosphere makes me feel extremely uncomfortable.

The manosphere makes me feel extremely uncomfortable.
Sometimes I want to fuck my coffee across the office

At the slightest thing. Yes I've felt like this for as long as I can remember.
Look I've looked into it really deeply and there are a *lot*

Of facets to it. I mean yeah obviously it's really simple though! But I am demonstrating
My hand is shaking. It just does it sometimes.

The manosphere makes me feel extremely uncomfortable: I say this to soothe
myself whenever I get like this.
Other hobbies? No, not really.

Sky Sports

"It's easy to romanticise the past, to argue that football used to be more spontaneous, more human. But the truth is football today is better. More complex, more collective, more intelligently designed. It's harder to coach, harder to play and, when done well, arguably more beautiful to watch."
—Guillem Balague, 'How Arteta, Flick and Luis Enrique are inspired by Guardiola', BBC Sport*, 29 April 2025*

No football existed before 1992.
The Premier League invented it and it broke away
From everything else and it is amazing and everything is in its wake.
Football couldn't even be defined before.

No man could spell "masculinity" before 2023 (most still can't).
Pedro Pascal invented its spelling and broke it away
From spelling and how he spells it looks expensive and nauseatingly good looking but we must try.
"Masuclaibtu" couldn't even be… exactly.

Arnold changed everything.
Pep changed everything.
Still, Pascal Cygan has actually won the Prem! The EPL!
You're more likely to get struck by lightning than play in the Premier League—the EPL—assuming you even want to play in it in the first place, that is (most don't).

Shamelessly Delusional

You're off the seesaw then!
I reckon you've been on that slide.

What of it. There is a whole park
To be swallowed up, I've nothing to catch
Left and my days are numbered
Unfortunately, unfortunately…

Though some of us smile in a downpour—wince
A touch at the poor
Mechanics that still
Get us there, like a hesitation

Fooled the downpour: now who's enlightened.
Interesting, isn't it—your
Nerves on the swings

Twinging in silence just a touch—because it's sunnyyyyy!—

While he feeds the ducks on the pond
That think they're humouring him.

The Eighth One and Your Legs Are Going Dead

So you're in a coffin burning off the remainder already? I'm,
Well, erm—drink? Delineate you said to
Delineate. But how am I supposed to do that?
Is this the real world, here,

Now—where I live from?
I feel… "murderous"; if I must give it something then that
Is what it is. We need to talk.
Because we need to talk!

While you lie there dying then: I find it *cute*
You see my face and write for me
And my caricature. Imagine if *I*

Was reading my own voice? I really want you to say my name!
Go on—do it. Out my misery. Damn it!—
Out my… *cocoon*?! Fine.

Also Outside

And now this is happening; so I'm afraid
Again, I'm still
Made only a little bit—which mea-
Yep!—that's it: another box that

Could break apart at any minute,
But is also ready to be filled
And ready to fall apart at the pressure of those very
Contents, as it remains

Fragile. OK let me explain the intricacies
Of this box that isn't ready yet. I'm sti-
I'm still making the box: indeed—it's

A little bit fucked, yes—I'm glad *you* said it!: I'd like
To but it seems really important not to talk
So… cloddishly about the box, to me. Just… having… a…
No! I haven't said yet: I'm also outside making the box.

Astral Bleaks

You run along Orion's Belt
Fingering yourself
Moulding monsters out the little shits that fall out
From millennia ago

While Penelope poses
Over a chair

With her arse in the air
Patiently waiting like a good girl

For your cleaned up paddle: can you
Handle the trip back to earth, you
Berserk ~~Odysseus oddity~~ every
Tom Dick and Harry? But not too quickly!

As you still look ready to explode
At what you can't let go. And go and go.

No No Return

Why is it you need an area shut off though,
Said the apprentice. The electrician dragged into teach—not long
Forcibly qualified—threw a spanner at him and it missed and hit the wall and the area?
Mildly entertained.
The apprentice leaning

Around the door, poised, ready,
Eager, trained: flicked the switch and found
His.. overalls lit up, standing in the area.
I didn't expect that either, Keith

The teacher said. I told them not to move me though—
Pub? The apprentice was already leaving
And the site fell down immediately. I found it mildly insidious
In there in a manner that felt directly proportional

To how they made us work, one of um said. At least
It appeared like that from the- Insidious? Directly proportional? 'Ark at 'ee!

Professor Joe Whiggamore

Your title, Professor Whiggamore, precedes you
Like a skier in the snow
Over hills on his skis
Unable to say where he's going; only

We know, don't we, Joe. Slowly
The students are enveloped,
And the past education does go. Like
That skier again—yes! He still

Might come to know though
The lodge is open. The pipes are broken?
I feel no cold; I was about to tell you a little something
About the history of this area

We are always told on the drive in: he glossed
A lot, as per, our guide. But does little matter—is your temperature
Dropping? The students upset with your lecture—
"On absolutely nothing!" they said: there'll be happy

With this change! You frozen and not them! What a marvellous
Retreat all the same. It's the same here
Every season, every cohort staggering
In the pines and spruces (nothing grows

Under a pine) snorting in hysterical frenzy at how we enjoy them all equally
Optimally clothed for the burning reflection
Off the snow in the increased
Radiation at these altitudes. No personally, Joe,

I do not like that season
When the spruces light up: it means
Nothing more, the bulbs
Are distracting and the students

By the fall
Seem to be more focused on that
Year on year. I'd say it makes these field trips more difficult to plan
But it really doesn't. Easier, if anything.

The pipes are broken? I shouldn't
Have spoken; I fear I've delayed
The engineer further. Not that it matters! Home soon, the excursion
Quicker, a waste of time

For you and I, I fear: have you seen them
On the tracks? Dreadful! And Joey your lectures are terrible; I'm glad
I remained a dumb driver. You'll be gone by the end of-
But of course: you're already tenured!

Ships, Smoke

But I do not believe they need saving anymore myself.
I don't know. It keeps changing.
When *did* we last see each other?

I knew I'd still find you here in this filthy sand though. I hate visiting.
I can feel it slowing me down already: how they live
In hour-long boats
With hundreds of clocks

They do not count and flags
Blown through. They're always right though
The flags. And they were already all in boats.

You haven't changed a bit either
If you are coming to me like this! You seem
Happier with it though. At peace? It looks
Like that: I know you yourself don't count.
Jesus how this village used to leave us

Wailing, howling at the dancing of the codgers

On the sand! Which is why…

It's why I'm surprised a touch
At you remaining. Did I bollocks—smoke signals

From the ship?! We may see them, ships,
Smoke.

[So gleamingly fleeting]

So gleamingly fleeting it is that it is a wonder
I am asked of myself to bring example
To you to ensure safe passage through
This valley of ourselves' constitution.

We do not pick these woods but I remain
Here voluntarily. This is so as to guide you away.
When the last one sojourns here we will
Feel them completely until another need not shout

At themselves anymore, echoing in and out
Of the trees. I promise I will have had my baggage
Then packed for the end. I'd be at the entrance
Looking back at the rubble

Fleetingly strewn along with rubbish—trash!—
In the soil, the sacred leaves unable
To furnish it. Then another would arrive, silent
Outside this forest. Forced to be quiet, shunned

As if the moment was not theirs? Though who
Decided? For we were clearly not asked. So I'd unpack
My belongings and we would sing the
Fleeting days of our lives away for safe

Passage again—for *you*, new constituent! And if I ask
Myself if I want you to stay—if I want
This choice: I cannot help but say yes.
Yes! For these woods capture the childlike purity we seek.

"Fuck! I'm Supposed to Move!"

It found me as I found it like
Looking up at the killer finally
And thinking, "Fuck! I'm supposed to move!": the thrill
Goes and the dangerous weapon is concealed

When you tell, even though you can see it bulging
In the killer's pocket. He's any sense he'll
Turn it into some kind of aircraft
For his children to pilot. But they won't the sky for it! The killer ruined

My days of flying. I was due a crash though: it was harder

By the end when there wasn't any
Turbulence. The ex-pilots I see in the fields
Now O man what a *trip*! Laughing

At an animal getting confused with some
Other animal. The killer graduated (I know) from
The same school as me. It was either that or
Gurgling away into the sea. I forgive him. We forgive

Each other. Like popcorn forgives corn: thousands
Of us watch the animals on the ploughed
Ground in raptures. We pretend to thrust with joy-
Sticks, our thumbs up. We can't see the sun rise, go down,

From here. It's as if the moon and the tides are still.
The animals point behind us at the killer though—"It's behind
You: unsafe!"—and to humour them we feign to look before turning
Back on the real killer picking them up: "Oh. My. God." they say.

Man Flu

Why can't I walk around with my nipples on sh-

Sending More Up

They just come to me! There are still
The good people and the bad people
Being distributed and measured, so it makes filling
The factory floor easy. Ah but it isn't
Manipulation, is it—I'm actually telling you!
I'm telling you the system
Of good and bad is flawed, and that you'll be reading
On the factory floor: there you are

Bubbling out what comes to me
For the other executives. It's how
It has worked… for… Let me see—
Dunno: they've taken the calendar! That's
The kind of thing you do too, no—mark dates? I've heard that
Anyway. Hold on—back in one: you're sending more up.

Pruflock

Do I dare
To care enough for peaches or

Crocuses? They are already all over
These lawns. I'm new but I have always felt it in me:
I used to stare
At the fruit like it was symbiotic
Relating to me alone, and I to it. Crocuses
Too sorry, yes—them
Budding has me in eclipse: the sprouts

Overwhelm.

So I do care and I dare to but it's fairly
Strenuous, the way I have to do this, the reason being
That it was locked away for
Springs and springs, the peel
All running rings and rings
Around me. It didn't appeal to me
Loudly enough. Alone with the bowls!
I knew I'd grow this grass though.
The shed was there
Only up the path. But on the days the

Petals they wear
Not what they were—I haven't
A prayer; there are
Pears with the peaches—and the waves
Would flare at the beaches, and my eyes
Scare and do not spare me: I do not
Trust myself with shears and forks around
The anxious bulb.

Hard to Talk About(!)

They can just
Let it fester and
Snip it out now. Or it snaps
One half and it's hard to talk
About. Still—no need for cave art there:

Annoying! The moon
From the prison yard (or cell
Or crib bars) meets a fast heart. Stars—
Oculomotor skills
Failing to manifest make the most.

And the purple
Excuses the martins call coats
Grant so many steps
Up into the treehouses.

Dan's 'Ferno

Well I need you so far wound up
So the metaphysical coil isn't a shock to you.
It may be that today
Your bang in the middle of one—
Used to look like a bonobo crippled in the grass
When you were like this. "Flow state" now—
And my stock is both through the roof
And deep within the volcano, *the*
Piece of string and the question finally answered

So very briefly: it's waxed
To the end just in case for the time
Being. Gets easier to mark
Postmodern slippages. I know! It's like licking
The last of the dough
Once the oven's been removed

Because who needs cookies anymore? Mugs
That must buy them off the guides, that's who.

Revolution 8.5

The lead singer was a hybrid
Of Lennon and McCartney,
But they didn't have any
Words to create lyrics but they could still talk astonishingly quick.

Get back! Take it back!
The band wants a new image!
They didn't want military insignia anymore they wanted
Something tighter

And even stricter: their canvas
Was getting far too vast paradoxically containing every
Instrument and lyric as suddenly there were loads of them all playing over
Each other—in the end they wanted to record something coherent to make money instead.

So the lead singer locked themselves
Away on their own for a while with their own
Thoughts to receive some leaner verse: they're no longer a
Hybrid or in a band.

Distracting the Inmates

The whimper
Before the tail between one's legs
That'll come back up to be eaten: no one cares!
You can then guide the rest.

No! Not by holding their hands! From afar:
We don't want them growing other heads—
They devour

Each other themselves then
Like you were, only you heard
The baby rattle in your

Throat. Ha! Like a biblical snake: you said that
Like them too! After you'd snuck

Back out the parade. Of course you can still
Cry! Indoors though.

Good question: not sure
What the stage is now for. Distracting the inmates?

Dunno

Hello, non-healing
Passerby. I know. I know I'd
Be creeped out
Too

By this voice—even
Some of the healers are. I am
Sticking with it, following others, projecting
Onto you, unaware

I talk to myself, growing a
Disingenuous
Head for more pain, giving

Myself a migraine
In three days. Some kind of metanoetic issue with the
Torso, I believe. I'll get it sorted. Thanks. Yeah catch you in a bit.

A Waste of Horology

I am now not sure
If it is a mechanical watch

Or a quartz one, this being more complex
Compared to when I was first training. Actually I wound

The watch, didn't I—this makes it mechanical:
Of course. I'm glad, as I don't want

To be periodically cleaning it and calibrating
And lubricating it. Once I've attached

A self-winding mechanism also,
All will be well. I think one is being

Made for it as we speak. Somewhere in this office, so-called—
Yes: hell in here, isn't it; can't you sense the

Tension? I am feeling generous: I gift the watch
To you; your natural movements will

Provide energy to the mainspring. The self-winding
Mechanism has been attached, just so

This can happen. I will send it to you shortly. Shortly.
Needs packaging. No it isn't quartz. It is a mechanical

Watch which requires the natural movements of the

Wearer to provide energy, as it now has

A self-winding mechanism—*all* made in this
Office, by the way. Every cog of the piece. OK I am gifting it to you

Now: we are close and I do not think the
Packaging means all that much to you? That isn't

Rude. I respect you. Quartz watches are supremely
Accurate; whereas you are more… spontaneous, I think—

So one of them would bore you. Whereas if you keep
Moving it at least this could work forever.

Kubla Khans

In sleep, in dreams,
Everything will come to fuck or fight you.
And it will not seem real.
And you will not believe it.

You will be travelling to others in the same way.
"This cannot be the whole poem—
Mummy. O mummy.
Daddy! Is that what they're all for?"

You wake to their potential, each poem.
Though it's difficult remembering sleep
Despite the books.
You long for a knock you also wouldn't believe.

You Can Do It!

The outrage kept me safe
Like a hedgehog
In a world of balloons; wait—a balloon in a world of hedgehogs.

They're full of hot air? I'm floating and
Smooth? The world's a

Historical sham I have to dismantle: think
How disgusting a baby must
Feel being left in its own

Soil: it's all insecurity! They. Are.
Narcissists! I'll slowly deflate this

Prickly
Loveliness
Holding me back—the boundaries of me

Breaking and forming to meet
My outrage to beat

Fuck
I don't even care now. Embarras-
That too.

The Light Doze of a Pro-Cock

Let me go then, you and you,
Now our evenings spread out on the bed are through—
And I'm left like a patient, near dead, tabled;
Let me go, spluttering within my own half-deserted sheets
With muttered treats
From restless nights with cheap one-night-stands
And dry dinner convo with oystered hands—
Sheets that billowed before some tedious argument
Of frivolous content…
To lead us both to an overwhelming question…
Oh, do not ask, "What the fuck is this?"
Let me go; visit someone else.

In my dreams they come and go
Talking of things from years ago. Doh.

Shape Without Form

I know not of becomes of me
I wanted to express myself
I have become something else
Entirely different it seems of me
I don't know what I am
I play this other person for the crowd
It isn't me and it isn't my mouth
I'm interested in things I never was before
I'm in places I do not like
To survive it is a half-life again

I've done the same again
What am I and what am I ever saying
I cannot believe this is me
I may not ever fathom this might actually be me

Mixing Memory and Desire

After big boy's spring-
Time cold, she's gone (what fuss!) into

Every other freckle (fuck). And it's hot!
The sun brightening the

Poppies like never before, it seems (how?!).
Going to stay

Indoors and sneeze? That'll be more
Old news. Will this adolescent

Show last forever? When *did* we all start writing?
"I couldn't care less if you're a poet": and this new

Basic syntax? "What is it then—your
'Very easy method

Naming plan-'" You had a
Sonnet mapped out; you go home

And burn your shelves by the end of April.
"And who the *fuck* is April?!" Confused? For some it's

Either this or
Orbiting with tissues.

By a Sky

The poppies, the bowlers—
What cruel remembrance like
Every other month. It's hilarious, these jokes
Growing new heads for the river bed.

So commemorate them! Statues and
Demonstration. Depression and elevation.
Swings and roundabouts. Adverbially
Making little difference beyond the river bed.

So commemorate them! Gushing
Readily to the sea; becoming tide, vapour, air,
Cloud—higher cirrus; lower
Stratus. Then rain, field. Bank

Then river cycling again. With a cute new umbrella?
A tetrapod'll sometimes make land and dive back in.

Sills Serve to Structurally Support

Once upon a time moths
Would flap about edging the
Candle for a few months. Some'd fly
Too high and die
Early. Fascinating stories

Got 'um along for a bit. The rest died anyway.
Seen a few adaptations and re
-Tellings since then. Fascinating
Stories we seem to be

Collecting more and more
From the sills, for some reason, actually—dying out

Larvae. Or giving them more light,
While we actually make the sky.
This isn't a story.

Talking to Year Four

I reckon I only get half of you here *at best*
On the best of days. The middle of the
Bloody day and Stephen *still*
Looks out at the moon. I'm sick of it.
I'm ready to get sacked. I'd say I'd be ready to
Teach you a lesson, only
That'd be pointless, wouldn't it. Can't

You all be a bit like Charlotte
There, rocking
A lot—sure. But laughing at the good bits
At least. Baddies are bad! See! You never listen!
Because what have I told you about clapping at that!

Jennifer. Jennifer I know
They're bad; but this… well…
This is a field trip, and you could
Learn to value my
Efforts—driving and
Guiding us at the same time: look a
Stone. And if I just drive us
Round… There! Now this
Here, kids, is
The other side of the stone.

I Really Do

You've got to find a way of just blaming someone else;
Other targets, blindly adopted: it's how it's done!
I mean, no one really knows why
We're born where we are or why
They chew that way; so it's enough
Of a topic to spend a few seconds
Thinking about—then what:
It's 9:04 am! Ever get that…
God this is mad: ever

Get that feeling where you both
Want a war, and don't want a war? You know—
To get you to lunch? But I thought you'd quit
Smoking. OK so I look at
The news and I get this, like, odd…
Sensation? Sensation and I want
Them to have, like, bombed the fuck
Out of some-

When I was a teenager…

And there was this giant…

Forget I said anything; but I do think you operate like this.

Pseudoscorpions; Class: Arachnida

Near the shallows
Can be found within fractured
Rock and picked up elsewhere in pine
Litter. They phoresy around, riding
On larger movers
To enter homes worldwide with their fifty
Brood. Can live in humus too, the dark
Matter in soil formed of
Decomposed dead animal; this
“Life-force” can hold
90% of its weight in moisture. Can
Spin silk for crafting sunken silken
Cocoons for mating and waiting out cold weather no book
Lungs though though Aristotle found them feeding on booklice.

Bear in the Big Blue House

leaves a little bit.
The others beside themself: Shit!
They cannot stand; they cannot sit.
They always want a cherry on it—

Every meal. Every thought.
They ought
To not make more
Stuff to stop the boredom

They think it is that it isn’t.
Some of us think
We know more. Something else pours
Out in the knowledge, like the bear

Eventually saying, No—this is my porridge!
Mine is mine and yours is yours;
And yours, again,
Has a cherry on—

That the bear will not stomach
Even if it leaves you flummoxed.

Bar Italia

You were the ‘nana blaming the fruit—
We’ve all done it. The priests’ collar,
The floating logs were all required

To get us here. I liked my funny little outfits too!
But this final
Push seems to be draining th-

Spoke too soon. No that was
Yesterday. The fruit? What do you mean?
I'm worried about these plant
Cuttings that are withering in the sun today. Being fried in the sun!

O I don't know; it's not even
Complicated once you see it. No need
To book into office hours though; not
That they've long left either: a world
Without plasters! Can you imagine?!

Perhaps you won't need to: apples
And trees come to mind. Well what do you expect—
Not everyone's here yet! And it's getting

Warm and I'd like to remove
All these layers, which now aren't
For all our benefit. And do make it warm.

Big Problems

The funny thing is, I *can*
Imagine waving my wrongdoings around
Like a horticulturist. Only I was an alpinist. Beat you!
And now your
Architecture: lovely—brutalist but
Lovely. And more expression
Of the same, I see! O you say not, but if you follow
The progress of the discipline,
You'd find I was a gherkin in a past life.
Being a mosaic

Paving slab now? I much prefer it. I used to have big
Problems with… People. Yeah.
Walking all over me. I know I know; I just
Send them around the garden instead. I doubt it but what's
The alternative: those sermons were mad.

He Was Having Swimming Lessons

The lifeguards are
Swimmers, the swimmers are lifeguards. The present
Are the past. And the past are the future?
This pool is a gift! Honestly—

I want you to keep it. Well you invested
In me so long ago, didn't you. So yes the past *is*
The future: I hadn't thought of that!
Weird cover though; and no ladder! Did you

Bury it straight into the ground? Marvellous.
Luckily I haven't been into the garden since
My husband left, not that he did a lot
Out here: the state of it around

Your pool! "I like flowers," he used to say to me—
You eventually just stop listening or
Noticing what they're up to. He ran away with a
Lifeguard, actually. He was having swimming lessons.

Therapist in Training

I'd say they're all stupid but they make good listeners.
Ever wish you hadn't left the house; only
I too am beyond that stage
Just enough to know what I'm talking about

Myself, and to acknowledge your two
Choices: bafflement or laughter. Then the laughter
Goes away though, doesn't it. It's OK—
I know. But here we are, here, together.

Streams erm not really anymore no: I tend
To just… see what ends up happening with
My days. If that includes a walk and a
Natural water supply then great—if not… well…

I can't say I'm really here. O I train; but
Bit weird, ain't it, if you already did it last time.

Record Application Numbers

When does the jiggling stop being such a diff-
O. Sorted.
God I feel ridiculous now—running with
My keys and other

Distractions in my pockets, my heart
On my sleeve
As always for the
Spectators of the town

Neutralised for the event, but partial
To discussing the spectacle
In running clubs. Well what else are they to talk about; it isn't
Just the towns, by the way:

I know what you city folk are
Like with your huge clubs and
Newsletters thinking it makes it more ethical. At the end of the day it's
Easier for me just to take one

Key out with me
On my own so I don't have to deal with such
Faux outrage, at what are races
To the finish line

At the end of the day, races we can
Lose convincingly, only it's not what it looks like.

This View

OK do you mind if I touch you now? OK if you just
Turn your head… there, and look
Below the third window. Sorry the third beam

With the cute little things on that look like moons: yeah I
Guess. If you look below that you'll see
Straight through the solicitors: that's

The board game cafe. I don't know. I can't
Even really explain it but I love
This view. And whenever it's open and they're

Playing, I feel… I feel fine? You know? Like
Nothing else really bothers me. I get the sense
That everything is as it should be

While I watch them play their games, the winners
Wi- O. Fair. Didn't like that then.

Entering the Changing Room

I am the cold steel rail. It's OK! Hang them
On me. Not what you expected. I know what you did
This morning, with those other clothes
On the radiator
Beneath the window. Yeah it's like cryptophasia: I know
You expect them to dry on there, preferably starched, like ink
On paper neatly bound, all ironed out. Better off not
Doing that though, aren't you: what if they blow out the window and get
Into the hands of the homeless
That'll use them to sleep in, no doubt. I wouldn't even buy what's hung
On me, right now, to be honest. Well you've made a decent trip
Out today, and I'm feeling generous and
You can handle it: those old
Shirts? Awful. Tatty. Will attract the wrong people.
Why not
Put some new outfits together, scrub them
Real well and put them on the line? No more castoffs
Or panic buys then. Oversized coats.
Baffling flat caps and scarves! You don't want people
Seeing you like that, trust, swinging
The wrong trousers around. Your grandfather's
Cardi? Jesus! People study fashion you know! And take

Advantage: they'd never talk to me
Themselves; just
Make yourself up differently. Or rail against me!

Bullshit Jobs

The staff at the checkpoints: are they really
Admitting to not being all there? Not all being there then—
This is why all the bungee
Jumpers can sneak in-
To the country and use the great lakes
However they wish. I'm not complaining. As a matter of fact I
Bet they'll be complaining.

I've been an auditor for
A few weeks, yes, why? I know
You can tell who trained me; least I'm not pouring
Soil over my cuts. Well on my

Last assignment we had a slight
Incident, you see. "The Scroll of Punctuation"—did you not hear about it?
One of the supervisors
Went mad and started slashing at everyone, and the mega-
Phonist wouldn't stop
Reading out the marks: "This is
Visceralisation for the salvation. It'll 'midify
The supply!" I saw him

Pissing and
Giggling behind the shack when he was done
Days later. The wounds
Are fine. I just let them breathe.
This
Seems to hardly
Matter but there's no vacancies
But loads of people loitering around the crossing now

According to self-reportage. Yet it's
Dead quiet around here. Yes aside from the
Histrionic screaming.

Cafe Shop Soundscape for Studying

The building
Was at such an angle
From the vehicle at that moment that
It looked 2D: I awaited
Green lettering. And you knew we'd be meeting too?

The clouds fizzled like a contraception.
Between us, the interpretations
Are undoubtedly pornographic. Though some
Days nothing fits: the

Air conditioning does try.

Yep—*that* kinda recording; the one that
You are… thinking too? The birds'll be
At it again in the morning now—the takeaways
Taking over; as a spike in demand for
Phylactery tattoos forms a queue.

Poem About My Soulmate With the First Stanza Taken From Snooker Commentary

"He is just waltzing around the table. He is almost like a ghost, he floats around the place"
—John Parrott

"I said at the time, 'Would it prove pivotal?'
And it looks like being so: incredible
How a little, harmless looking cannon
Has changed the momentum of this match."

And how will the
Snookered get out of this, both
For the sake of his own career—nay:
Life!—and for the sake

Of the reader; for the soulmate
Was the soulmate, after all: amazing

Ball control, especially
In and around baulk; fantastic long

Shot success rate; countless
Maximum breaks—where her opponent

Did not get even one
Opportunity to leave

His chair, let alone to speak; and a master at
Stun shots too. All spin, in fact! So he finds it

Tough. And I should know: I speak to him enough
On the practice tables: "These pockets

Are rough," he says. "They're never the same!
And I only seem to ever be

Sublimating my energy
For her, into absolutely everything; until I

Can hopefully one day kiss a new
Object-choice ball, without her cue

Still rattling my jaw." No! He didn't explain
"In and around baulk".

Erm, Yeah We Can Go for a Walk. D'You Want To?

Sex and conspiracy
In varying magnitudes. Didn't matter
At school. It even seemed to be
Doing the trick, only it's impossible to count
What's gone, despite the days
They made us stand all silent while we
Giggled and found it odd without telling
Each other: not a lot's changed
For most. And why should it! The brain started
Sometime ago and we're only just
Itching some place, before it fights back
Like a spike in record players. You think
VHSs won't do the same? And there goes
Me going away quietly eventually too
With a few thingamajigs: I reckon you know
What I'm on about. Come on—own up: it's
A place we all circle through
Now and then: "I wonder how I'd feel if I just
Visited again." Why is thought so randomly bought
And made concrete? Then they pick up the phone
And reenact some minor battle, how hilarious
It was and how silly everyone was. Didn't
Dare ask though, did you, about the other routes
You saw available on the nautically-mapped sheets
We had to study, the ones you knew the teacher
Would only mark you down for. It left you
Hornier than ever, collecting cassette tapes,
Until you discovered the beauty of
LARPing. Yet that committee were taking notes
And scores too! And "perfectly authentic
Uniforms"?! Ensuring all the players got equal
Lines and it gave you that cluster
Headache at the very back of your head again
While you stood waiting for the bell so you could
Do it out loud.

Lemon Elephant Juice

I skate here and live extremely differently over there.
If they think like that I don't even acknowledge them anymore.
Well they usually scream it.

I have a feeling
You won't have to ignore the guilt
You don't acknowledge of the thing that doesn't even reach your throat
When they're saying that basic something in the meeting preamble now. In fact there isn't

Even a word for the knowing. Saunas for you!
O it's a sort of
Silent one. Fine—nonexistent.

To See How the Other Half Live

To die and go on
Talking when you are massive and cleverer.
To have achieved the greatness
Of death and still remain spectacular.

To have a vernacular and to know
How to use it and how.
To allow for so much dross around
One knowing that they will sing my song as

They need to because they are dumb, not
That I am judging them. To be the
Penn to everyone's Teller, only my
Pen is not confessional and they are far from silent.

I have no idea how it comes out like this
Magic and that bit too but I reckon as I
Died I was given spectacular abilities unbefitting
Of not even me as I am dead and I am so free not even me believe I.

It's Time to Dig Another One

It's weird you were playing the
Banjo to begin with, then showering in the library and
Expanding rather grotesquely
Beneath, relatively—as if the pages simultaneously provided
Steady smooth cataract surgery without question.

No? And the musicality's crass? Uh oh.

Not everyone needs peaches. Nor gossamer.
Nor crocuses. An arachnid
Spun a web on their behalf
In the opening scenes
On a log at sea, drifting,
Stomaching the stone. Not 'alf! Not

Concerned with syntaxes
Either nor sins. Dark out there, crossing borders,
Alone in umbra, the moon
Lighting matters creating umbra—helpful for a while;
Highlighting it. Bloody 'ell: I remember when we did Latin.
Surely they ain't still doing that? Luminescence

Getting on your nerves, pulling them back
From Outer Mongolia. Memories,
Mistakes trials lessons—
Synonyms go past
For the cutting room floor. Demotic

Sounds demonic to me, kid. All the viaducts

And tape only took you so far: we know you couldn't help looking
From the window, passengers, but it's a long journey and
Shaky track. When the books still
Burst the boxes at the seams? Discordant
On the valley floor like that
Out of tune banjo again, feigning Rilkean threads, wet
Surface tables of transparent
Boxes again, evenly-tinted, luminescent
Watersheds you already forget you'd just

Emitted: what if they knew, eh—that you're an actor; that you
Are just another complexing
Insect that can't admit they enjoy puns and
Wordplay and be done with the botanised
Bio: the banjo's

Fine! Perfect for instrumental solos. Relics and
Yo-yoing? You do you; while we that manage

The set design muck out
The gutters on the roof or rebuild
The bridges snapped or tunnels you pass
Through or stick to with that
Dotty light at the end; because

The tunnels be dark: that's all! The bridge
A route that takes its toll—laugh! Then it can fall, the stringy
Seasons left in the will. Or not left in the will?

Ha! It's odd though, isn't it,
The paradox: if you find yourself
Looking up
Or researching "umbra", let's say, it surely

Means you'll be hearing them chords again soon, however faintly: quick!
Put the conkers out! Howl! Great. Jesus what
Were they recording in here before?

Founding Themes

Photography has trumped painting. Film
Has trumped photography: it captures
Everything. We don't have to read
Books anymore as there is history all
Over the internet. Nothing in a film is
Real, as-is. Cadmus had to follow a cow
To build a town. In the National Gallery, children
On a school trip stop

Dead in front of Haarlem's depiction
Of a dragon eating a water gatherer's
Face. Instinctively, it is the children's favourite
Painting, though they know it's not

Real real. Though I dare not ask them. This is a
Poem you might think about all day. Woman

Poses for photo in front of painting of horse.
Photos of paintings, descriptions
Paintings descriptions. Sunflowers.
Bathers. Bathers. People race through the
Rooms tearing off their clothes going back, finger
Paint all over the canvases cock

Painting wrong muse musey museum, smeared instinct
All over the walls no boundariesframescription kids
Chewing through boundary rope and choking translating
Tour guide Chinese student translates Cezanne's
Bathers on device right as we need a few more
Lines, Thebans. We have killed him, Thebans,
And you can take us or leave us, to be honest, because it looks
Comfy out there and the hostages are at your mercy. Water-Lillies for peaceful
decoration. *Whistlejacket* socks for sale.

The Sleeper Train Back From China

I've wasted time. I've wasted space.
I took what's mine. Let me tell you about it;

I'll convolute it! I can't decide
What I am—*I'm*

Not that though. I'm a telescope
On the train

Separate from the station—damn!—
Measuring really acutely

Present moments; that chug chug
Chug

Away: some things
Never change. I haven't felt a thing

Yet.
I'm told it'll be horrendous?

I am going to explode
Into a black hole and

Doubt all these stars
I'm

Currently still drawing on?! How did I writ…
Because

Even after all the
Spaced

Out pain
I've dripped out,

I am
Still something.

Amateur Dramatics

"No, I cannot, I cannot stop my mouth"
—Abigail Williams, Arthur Miller, The Crucible

The falling

Cherry blossom that
Year arrived on set dropping its

Secrets on me from the
Family tree

Within nine seconds of
Meeting me, before the cast

Arrived to shadow
My work—Hello—as I'd learnt

Techniques: no
Eye contact with the

Petals. They just sort of
Hover there offering a

Huff sound,
Before waving back in the street.

Huff

I'm out of control I'm
Going to blame someone else
In poetry: nothing

You can do if you think it's you.
Not my problem.
I don't even know what you're insinuating—

I'm talking about myself. Look this isn't
Really working for me anymore? I think we're
Taking different paths? I'm not taking

Anything obviously it's why
I sound like

You think I do I think you're confused—stop blaming

Myself. It isn't our fault. Fine it was out of
Your control I don't know what
You were thinking how could I do this to you.

Poverty's Paradise

I hover outside the arena, above,
Below no hymn sheet to bleat diff-
Erential equations: I'm in my indifferent
Phase, me: DID, didn't it cages? Takes ages.
Too long! Schrödinger's parents. This pen is
Live instead from the big (bad)
Bong: event horizon findings
Fly in (BUZZ!—it's all gone out
Here. Not wrong, no. But don't hold on!); cheesy
Radio songs? It dunt matter—in the
Stands they just want chatter: I
Provide gutter press anti-matter
And hide to the side of the foul
Sociological clatter, banged
Around as it is (a bit like this)—hot air
Allowed to fool as an answer: "This signal
Sounds like a wanker. Whereas my Da-
What?! I mean my *team*
Had it harder!" Whatever. Minutes

Later, Jupiter passes over
-Head, like God over a cot.

More Thoughtless

I am incredulous reading about my own
Incongruence. O fuck it: my own incredulity
Too, as we might as well make it self

Self-referential, too. I, though, am not sure
If that is correct. Nor am I sure.
And I feel that may be the poem done; but I…

Well, I don't really know, actually—what
I am like: that is what I was initially going
To say. Although I have said it now in some

Way, I suppose! But I cannot *think* what it is
Adding up to overall, only I know that it is;
And I reckon that's the trick: even if you don't

Write them you can still read them as if you are reading
Someone else's words and leave… incredulous; and yet more thoughtless.

Dawn

You just have to stop eating out the bins.

I Am up in the Clouds

I refused to kill
Myself so I could undo
Myself on your shelves for years
To come in more ways
Than one as you keep coming back
To them. The books, I mean. Sometimes
I will sound
Mean and sometimes I will sound

Sound, or like a clown or like your
Mate or like a degenerate.
Sometimes I will sound like a lazy
Poet. Obvious. Obnoxious.
Potentially horny. O well poor you poor
Me? It's not up to me! This is one of the shit ones.

After a Heavy-Handed Rehearsal

It'd been coming for a few days
This time, that's all—the ol'
Loop up. The float through.
Who the fuck is talking and what a shit
Way to put it. The sad
Stitches for one side of
The body, becoming the poem,
Creating a coordinated future
Not for the speaker as that is being
Done anyway. Irritating some shmuck
That gets a bit more tightened, then later
Ignores shmuck. Aren't I
Brave—and *that's* a bit more me;
You wouldn't understand, shmuck—
Having the lonesome
Straw of being unable to offload
My poor-me's to the opposite sex
As freely as I think I see it oppositely.
I fear I journal here showing my calculations
Amongst some creative control. But then
That becomes part of the dance
Too. Not a poor-me but another
Not me—or was more poured away
On the page, stitching
One side of the face simultaneously? I'm holding
The camera, as usual, shmuck. Hideous!

*

The cameraman was tied up and the day
Is now glorious. A tear
Rolls down starboard. Penelope draws
A bath and runs to her conclusions—
Fuck her. The man with the name
On the back of the chair will do it and then all
Will be well for the book launch. Poor what?
Pour the champagne for the guests, love!
It's staggering work and I don't know how I do it at times either—
We're incredibly fortunate. Scoff!—did it
Get choppy? You can imagine
Can't you. This is why they call you shmuck though because I know
You damn well *can* imagine.
Penny looks ravishing, doesn't she. Don't
Care about them the boy is sorting it. I
Can't see how that'd come back round, no—
Dreams? You're in the past. We lost
Seven million men out there, you know.
I didn't cry once. In fact I ate
Most of them and spat out all those grisly, fiddly wires
And line breaks. O who cares—it's published now:
Guests! Guests it is all
Manufactured! We rooted away
For most the trip; and I'm keeping that: I'm editing
Your minds as I glide into the future HAR HAR HAR—
Boy! Penny you whore! Come come—selfie. No stand *this* side.

*

We only have one chance
To capture this scene, considering
How expensive
The set is. I mean, look at the ship!

The three of you need not
Steer anything: we can do that from here.
But we would like you all
To hold hands as the explosion

Eats. You will not go
Instantly as we want some of the extras
From the audience to land
On you—faux

Limbs and brain. The makeup's fantastic! It nearly took me away
Again and it is so
Encouraging but I'm ol'
Hat now. No excuses. Hold

Hands and they'll spray on you,
And you'll cease to exist
After too: they'll be an imperceptible
Gap—they'll be no marker for the raft; and any

Shmuck that takes issue with that
Will have their own issue, I'm afraid: I'm done
With such turns

Of phrase, two, one—a wonder!
O how *gorgeous*, darlings. How did… Wow!
I'm sodden! We've nothing!

Fragrance Free

I think you'll find
Us ones *here* know your little mirroring
Game now, boys—so the jig
Is up: we aren't going to be your moth-

O anything
But the ships though! We cannot possibly hear
Another three thousand years
Of *ships*! Please!

*

We've talked and we're willing
To hold your other hand
While you do it? Great. That's that then.

Yes that'd be lovely actually—
I'll make dessert and wash up.

Like a Movie I Could Watch on the Telly

We float in space.
I pretend to have the experience I am writing about.
And you think I'm writing? I'm being lazy.
When I started
Being lazy, I floated into space. The wires
Behind the telly
Hanging down beneath the desk
Didn't bother me anymore then.
I don't even have a telly: as if
I would have learnt to fly
If I had a telly. It would have taken
Up all my time. I'm writing
On an aircraft, crafted
By me
Now that I am free: gross! I'm only a passenger!
I'm only having a laugh with ya!
I watch myself in the mirror
Like a movie I could watch on the telly,
And I see the wires
I want you to see

That feed up into the desk
Into the poem
From the craft and I don't know where
They lead, only I do really
Make the effort to keep them
Tidy in a manner that makes them
Appear completely inconsequential
In space.

Out the Wake

I was stared into submission while my dad was in the kitchen.
He played his part too
But I enjoyed
That rhythm

As it came to me. I… I know how it feels to be a woman—
I don't know what I'm saying. I'm too clever for my own good
She was always
Screaming, not

To my face. It'll make you
Spaced out, being Joyced like that. Enjoy it while you can! As climbing
Out past everyone

Else that seems to stare in exactly the same way while you
Sound absolutely insane
Ain't a fun game.

Toward Me

I was so guilty, driving in the fog, the tracking
Gone and the steering
Column my responsibility? If I let
Go I clipped
Someone on the path, I thought: it turned out they lent
Out a little bit. At least a little bit! One of them told me
Before they'd entered the dock. Then we both
Realised how silly that was. I like
Being chased by people with knives. It makes me
Race instinctively. Yeah the tracking's still gone—
How else you meant to race? There's a team
Following measuring the trails. They end quick, no?—the
Tyre marks and screeches? Embarrassing; I really
Did think we were making them
The first time but we'd already been around; and the stands
Had new sponsors, and the crowd knew brands—that's all.
The crash, eh: how many
Dead and I'm laughing now? I'm not even bothered
About the road markings. Completely arbitrary, captured
After the fact for "safety measures". "Fact"! More dross; as we looked
Back, did we not? And there hadn't been fog? Smiling:
It always looked like you were stepping

Through it toward me with that blade.

Wind(ow)

I just thought of you, ‘gram.
You are not a real person and I am
Living in a school, having fantasies like
When I was at school, looking out of the window.

I work part time and float around like a breezy cloud.
My brain is loud
Because I wanted a rhyme because I am completely
In control. I want everything to fit on one line

This time, so there’s no faux-wrapping
Required of me on the Notes app. Perhaps you could
Dunno: that just instinctively came out. I am
Delusional. I am going to Alicante

In three weeks and have very little money.
I am going to woo a delightful continental beauty
And she is going to be included in my fantasy.
I look out the window

Barely. I am actually going to Alicante. Though
For all I know, I might not be on form. Storms
Are surely due in Europe soon? We’ve been
Too fortunate with this weather of late: what did

We do? Certainly not the right lessons
At school, that’s for certain. Delusions
Work for me, especially when I am writing poetry
Or getting through life: my body strives

To make sense of me within agony—I spend money
I used to squander on nonsense
And alcohol and drugs and women and choose the
Opposite of where it wants to keep me now instead.

I mean, the writer
Does that. I am not even sure I am the one looking
Out of the window or going on holiday now: he is
Delusional. Wind. It is probably another word

At this stage the sentences don’t even have to follow
I hope she is Italian. Generous and Italian.
I am going to be in my stallion phase
Rather than pony phase else it will be embarrassing.

Boom! Returns

O what now: an adult film company
Saw my poem about orgies,

And they want a piece. How will I ever find
Peace enough to get my pieces together?

It's not big and it's not clever. In fact it is
Fairly average but it pleases—this
Pornographic pirate's life ain't for everyone. It is
For me because I am willing to be a plank

And parrot absolute drivel: I swivel
Around and around in my chair at work
To find Claire with a wand vibrator in the air
Naked in front of me suddenly and a boom operator

Over there and a camera waiting for me to be me—
Woe is me. Woebegone! What
If I get the poem wrong? The frenetic fucking?
They wouldn't want me anymore then, when really

I only wanted to make my story into songs :(Claire
Is on my case now though. I can't face her—I ask her
To face away and I sigh at her orifice. Just another
Day in the office. The poems I put this desk through.

The desk I put these poems through.
It must be something I'm going through. It must
Be something I am not doing in real life.
The sky is blue and I am entering it and then I will enter the sky.

How It Sometimes Washes Up

I was visiting the seaside to swim in my own
Sewage, then I thought, so I put on my Sunday best and
Sat on a deckchair
I then immediately gave up for an old lady

We'd paid. I removed all of my clothes and ran into the sea
Nakedly, wildly, and refused a towel afterwards. We made a sandcastle then—
I know!—on the beach like…
You'll see! And we put a moat around it

And joked: "That'll keep them out!" But we winked as we
Joked and the two Toms looked sadly at the moat,
The tide coming in. We slept on the beach with the moon
Auspiciously, before it went behind the clouds

Like a choice. "The sand: it's like
Life, isn't it," (see!) we said as it hid, ceremonially. And we figured we'd shown and not told.

Common Ostriches and Inaccessible Island Rails

Finally I
Reach the ceiling. Above my
Parents. They were tough. They probably

Had it tougher—it's annoying. On the
Roof, I've looked: I have to leap, I reckon. Before I
Know it I'll be a flightless
Bird and
Famous. Can I create my own Wikipedia page? The Two
Times I've been on
Stage have prepared me
For my voyage. There are rats
Beneath me, staring up, wondering
How I can do it.
She's not here.
I've got this odd
Sensation travelling
Me again. I dedicate this one
To all the families out there, struggling
To stop it and
Get it together. It is the age
Of everything
As it always has been. Only
This time it's different, everybody, as we
Can push through it together
In several pieces making
An even wider whole.

Purging Nonetheless

Coiling out the eternal spring, sir
Pertinently? The reports
On the weather have been conflicting: fair
To middling drafts, rainbows,
And/or snow. Hmm—yes you
Seem to be experiencing all twelve thousand and seventeen
Possibilities, plus a dash of wordplay,
To mask more pain. Away you go again!

Is it sssafe? Who was that anchor?
And on and on it goes
Saving face—chewing over afters, served
In winters prior: not from this skin! But it needs
Purging nonetheless. Abstractly though, master!—
The ingredients aren't for a poem.

"WOAH"

You don't know what I'm really like. You don't know
What I'm WOAH

Hey!

Erm… did I say something
In my preamble?

"WOAH" sounds great though, doesn't it?

Workshopable. O wot r der

Zombies doing now: pretending
They're functioning

Like us, here in heaven?
And then…

And then I went for her, her gleaming
At having been caught. Sorry I didn't expect this to happen: I went

For her, but I stopped myself. I really am so sorry but does anyone have a tissue?
This next poem is called "WOAH".

Pulp Fiction

When I was six I got myself into some right bother
(What! Well it must have happened before!
And he must have had it harder
With his father and him

With his father before that, passing down
The same old watch like
An old-style hat. Then I met

Eurydice. And you'll never guess what… Yep!—
Both on the same clock! All on the same clock!
And everyone had forgot!
Half the time we are on

Half the time and then we're…

Not…?). What? Sorry mate I
Haven't got a watch. You're in

Bits? Stop playing it then.

Ahriman

It takes effort: the years
I spent shunning conversation
About the weather, looking down
My nose. Now? It's all I ever talk about!
Along with the patterns

I see everywhere. Behave—they're trade secrets!
But are they *not* in the walls? Has anyone
Proved otherwise? Has anyone ever said you can be difficult
To engage with? It's just a comment. Just an observation.
At a certain point something snapped

In me and I *refuse* to have any suitable clothing. It's a saying! About the weather!
"*Un*suitable"?! Well, that means something *very* different, doesn't it—

How bizarre! It seems to work for the surface though; and whatever
Works for the surface? Covers the bare bones too!

What I'm Better At

Blem! I've just stared directly at myself
In the mirror and no one was there. Whatttttt!
Hey what the fucks got into him. What
The fuck is going on right now.

Really struggling with it still. I look back
Again and again and I do not know
And cannot say more than this
And that I am not sure what has got into him:

How else can I say it
To myself, because I keep doing it. Fine!—
He's really got under my skin! I don't

Really know what to do with him: right; not
Sure how I'm so involved now.
He's going to lose me completely if he isn't careful.

Store Front

A place of moral superiority. I know!
Despite all the signage; can I have a copy
Of *Sen*- Wait—I thought this was a bookshop?
Again?! OK what to now? A bakery?!

Doesn't even make sense. What can I buy—"Whatever
You like. As long as it's what I pick"? Look what's
Got into you: you were a…

I can't even remember or be bothered to list them all now;
Do you even like cake? That bread maker looks fucked. Have you…
Look have you considered

Just taking a break instead
To work out what you might want to do
And why you might want to do it? You even agreed the neighbourhood
Felt o- A *carpenter*?! Fucking hell.

How to Not Splash Yourself

Oomp! There's a poem there: the wording
Above the urin…

Errrrr—ignore me. Nah. Nah I just hadn't
Done it enough. You know. Honestly—it doesn't matter.
Everything was a series

Of some sort

I hadn't really noticed before. I was full of theory
I hadn't really noticed. I was throwing shit
At the walls, theoretically

And actually. Then stuff lifted—was pulled
Up through me; or I fell through it. That doesn't really matter though!
Sorry I sometimes return there; you sometimes

Encroach. Learning! Owning it!:
I sometimes return there.
Anyway then I was in a world

With nauseating people, we knew everything,
Everyone else in the world was grossly abhorrent in one way or another—but we still cared about them deeply
From as far away as possible: you must be able to sense it still having an impact on me?
And I get more embarrassed
Talking about that time

Than the shit theory
And smearing, to be honest. Now I'm here though
Most of the time

With you, watching stuff and that. I mean when I say
"I'm here", I don't mean...

I don't mean I'm pissing all the time
Or talking to strangers. But again, I return
At times and get lo...

Errrrr—ignore me! Yeah have a good one, pal.

<u>The Less I Know The Better</u>

I'm emptiness. What?! I'm emojiness. Eh?
I'm emotionless. I'm nothing. I'm gone.
Everything alright? I'm not sure, I'm afraid.
O god—that's it: I'm afraid.

At least I don't sound absolutely insane!
At least I'm being brave. At least I'm not in the grave.
And to be honest, I feel dead, to be absolutely honest.
What if I put two and two together though? Nope—

Never. I'm never going to share this either.
I can't. What if Heather saw it? Dean
I spoke to in Wethers once? I'm

Fucked, aren't I. I'm never weathering this.
It rains and it rains and it rains. I feign and strain
A sunglasses face. I can do nothing

*

For myself but everything. Forget everything.
No I wasn't saying anything earlier—why?
Look can we stick to the agenda, please: I want
To get on with my life

Because I feel like I have been wasting time, doing things
That are fake, at best, and downright manipulative
—Destructive—at worst. Jesus Christ: I'm not *not*
Being kind to myself! I'm just saying it like

It is—which doesn't mean I feel like shit. I'm detached
If anything. Not floating above it, no (that's him) just… acknowledging…
The nonsense I suppose. And you're making me

Hesitate now: we don't *need* to talk about everything! And
To be absolutely honest, it wasn't lovely to meet you too. I'm indifferent.

Straw Moon

OK let me just check I've got this right: you gathered
All of you together, gave
Everyone a straw,
And tried to suck the moon down—yes? Then

The man with the hair showed up. OK just calm
Down: I wasn't
Suggesting the straws brought the man. By the…

Well, I was just wondering: did the
Moon, you know, budge?
Sorry. Sorry it was ridiculous question.

Personally I am all out of ideas; though every
Time I talk to you? I feel something leaving me, like
I'm coming together more? Fair enough, yeah: "more"
Does rhyme with "straw".

Flush White

"Nice one. Cheers, pal."
He looked at me like I was from hell.
He looked at me like his shit
Didn't spell. He looked

At me like I couldn't smell
His bigotry. I'm glad
I'm not a bigot. I'm glad I am
Poetic instead, so I can play around with my

Bigotry
Here. If I was brown and used "pal", I bet
He wouldn't assume I was foul; actually

I bet he would, only he would know

To feign
Above his disdain more
Overtly. And if he knew
I wrote “distain” initially? The glee

Would no doubt see
Him through another minute, before he
Landed back in his own
Feebleness and requirement

To serve us, the wanky
Barista
Loser that doesn’t deserve another full stanza.

Sorry I Meant This One Is the Real Me

I parody and parade and remain horny. Don’t ignore me.
I struggle to get up in the morning. When I do you know about it.
You do, alright. That’s when I’ve got a lot to say for myself
After everything that happened that
Time as it does and no one
Remembers fully yeah unless they do in which
Case they are usually
Quiet for a while while it goes away and then it stays that way forever.

I sublimate
Because I had that word in my “To Use” folder. Salt
Over the shoulder? Wow—my mum does that.
O it’s Buddhist thing! Love. I get older and look back and realise I was pretty mad; I’ll get
Even older again and find I wasn’t even that bad.
Until then, I am holding on
To all the words I want to use. Whatever I choose
Is a choice: this is *my* voice. I will be hoisted by my own petard. It’s like, like, irony.

The Bonobo and the Atheist

Covered in scars sending me photos of her ankles tied up.
I didn’t know where to look. Then I did
Again instantly as I looked at the screen again.
I was twenty-five going on ten. It was

I’ve no idea: I disappeared
For a year and can’t remember either of us
Saying yes or no. We had safe words though, surely?
I’m guessing she explained it all to me? I didn’t

Feel. Now I do.
It was probably absolutely amazing
For me to do some abominable things and forget about them.
We stopped

Speaking because I got extremely jealous of her hanging out with my friend, the tween
Waking up finding emotion too intense.

What I'm Good At

Massive huff. I've also had enough.
Fuck it: I'm completely incoherent. I am literally right now
Reading myself back
And I am oblivious. Clueless. It's hard to even do this

When I've done it again: jumped. Lost myself.
What the fuck am I going on about. I think it's him.
I genuinely think it's him; while I'm like this

All the time! Truly I am really going to conclude
What the fuck: that he's ridiculous. While I
Stay incoherent. It's ahhhh… it's a good job
What the fuck. I'm thick as fuck, too: means

What? What? What the fuck is he going on about?
Means I'm better than him too
Conceptually. Not *really* really. I'd never think that about myself.

Concerto

"Rebel and a liberator
Find a way to be a skater"
—Red Hot Chili Peppers, 'The Zephyr Song'

God forbid I own and show my competency
As a human being. I used to sleep rough in the skate park because I didn't know who'd be horny.
Astonishing modes of expression
Follow me so as to hold rhythm, imperfect rhyme.
Why can I not keep a consistent moment captured? But we must
Know why. All of it. Can we not then forget it
Like the straw people do I target? I am not descending
Again but skirting in ways undefined: invite yourselves in!
Latch your experience onto this world: even I
Did Google "onto". You can work it out.
Take yourself extremely seriously
In some loose sense within a framework. Do not talk
Of personality or horoscopes could you float
Above the paper too? There's time! You could skateboard!

It Does Things That Are Even More Moral Than Morality Itself

Struggling with impeccability today.
Being everywhere
And implacable is a curse.
I should have stayed in the hearse

Staring at my own coffin, hoping

I wouldn't have to save the whole
Universe but it looks again like I am going to have to do that.
Halt the traffic. Remove your hats. Coming

Through to you live now from the map-
Less zone outside of space and time.
It is a sign that you are sublime when you
Have to decline the soup—"No soup for me,

Thank you"—because to eat would be an abominable
Excuse: "Sorry I was playing with
The soup. Because it's the soup I am not swimming in
With the other cretins, dur!" Obama did fall-

Off more than I ever would be able to. It's tough
At the top when your heart is heavy
Because it is full, even though it is unobservable, unless
It does things that are even more moral than morality itself.

Another One That Was Written With Instagram in Mind

I like it in real life but my avatar wouldn't. I surely couldn't.
It is my orderly personality performing ordinary performity.
I am extraordinary poetically but in reality I conform religiously.
Fuck the pope but the me on there has standards to uphold I don't even hold dear to I.

The more I hold the character the more it slips from me.
The mask slips and I think it's him but it's not really me—
I'm performing. The me making the avatar is then deforming.
It gets disorderly and then I feel disordered and don't feel poetic.

Some pope-like poetry will save it. I'll order some.
O hang on a minute: what would I order? I might perform the wrong
Performity and not look extraordinary. I'll have to take…
I'll have to take my time and be really fast at the same time. The real me—who still likes it, by the way;

But you must understand—and the avatar will go at different rates.
Then I'll look personality. Everything will be covered temporarily.
Until the mask becomes the face like a deformity. I'll flagellate myself on screen.
The performance will be extraordinary and they won't be able to like it because it is an extraordinary conformity.

I Am the Lie

I wanted to die then I made a lie. I am the lie. You
Can blame Frederick Seidel for keeping me alive.
At other times it was someone else, though
I don't know how to break away from his rhymes

Currently. OK fine I'll read and
Feed off the style of someone else in
Around four days. I am crazed and

Nearly only on the page.

What is real? Fiction, if real is
Existence. It is a speech bubble so it can burst
You into flames. Did you want it to burst you
Into song? I burst myself

Into song a few times and got it wrong.
Sing quickly enough and you will cotton on
To yourself. Head south and watch your
Pen and it will tell you what you are about.

Soft Centres

I came out of the womb into the hottest world
In an ice age, everyone around me frozen
Without knowing all I already correctly knew
Bless them, of the exact time and place I was born

In and also of the whole of history. Forget teething—
That did not have any bearing on the correctly
I already knew, nor the heat nor the ice,
Although I was completely at fault for the ice

I thought for a while, and when I am in a hot
Environment the icebergs rear their heads again.
I'm trying. We are all. Trying.
But have you ever bitten a lolly? Put

Your tongue on a frozen drain
Pipe? It then needs gently warming.

Erm. Ermmmmmmmmm

"until the next day."
—Robert Walser, 'I Wish I Had'

I fell apart. I couldn't work. I couldn't talk.
I could fuck. I was so fortunate.
Fuck knows what you do if you can't do that
To get yourself out of bother: I lent money

Off someone I met on Tinder.
My character exaggerates. He's ununbelievable.
No one notices anything. It's cringe
Where we're at. I'm a royal "we", I mean. It was Hinge.

We broke into pieces and the
Tea spilled out. It was orgasmic
And horrific, as if every teapot
Has it. If people say I'm "lovely"

Now I stop speaking to them. Baffling

Species. A disease ridding itself of instrumental
Incest in a convoluted way with consciousness. A spout
Here and a handle there housing

Horny louts. £1000. The speaker of the
Character of the speaker synapses its
Own syntactic galactic gadget and the
Name on the pamphlet sleeps alright after that sometimes.

By Now

Guys I've just had *the* experience.
I was in the world and experiencing myself
And *it* as it is and so experiencing both even more so
Than the zombie trash who don't experience even

The not-quite experience of both that we get
To wrestle with on their behalf. But I… don't…
Guys I just stepped back
From *the* experience as I didn't want to lose

You. I know I know: I could have stayed there
In the indescribable world and
Described it endlessly in
Poetry—what the zombie trash cannot access;

But I'm back with you because… well…
That "myself" was just too difficult in the
Second line. Too selfish! The kind of thing the
Zombies would write, I realised! Not that "I"

Realised that in *the* experience,
Which is indescribable and so cannot actually be
Described from. You know I've sometimes felt like
Someone's son: you know why.

"Mare Mare Mare"

You ain't gena believe this: I'm enlightened now. I know!
I know it is absolutely *wild* and yet also completely
Unsurprising and uncircumstantial to me. No indifferent sighs here though.
I've nothing to sigh out! I fly about

Beneath my mighty shelf with everyone else as if nothing substantial
Has even happened. A bit of Jesus juice here;
Some reiki healing there. Yeah—loadsa
"Air" sounding words in my poetry now too: sometimes

I just put "mare mare mare" and save everyone
Within 10,000 miles of me. Although I can't say a lot about it, which is extremely

Satisfying to me, of course. I mean nothing satisfies me.
I mean I don't even need to be satisfied? I might

Lie down in the street and let everyone run over me. God I'm over me
And everything and I'm nothing and it's like I'm on retreat from something.

Through the Ages

I bipolicked up through the ages
At the bar without the foggiest in a fog.
I didn't even know I felt like a dog! Before
Briefly thoughting there was a god—
Before that that I was a god, what

With all the Cleos and Joans literally
Calling me god a lot. Embarrassing
Believing any of
That nonsense. It's 2025, Ash!
You're sitting at a bar and the history of

Humanity has been
For 300,000 years now—you're not
A crocodile: see you later, alligator! For god's
Sake I didn't *mean* it
Like *that*: I'm not even at the bar! Bi… bi*policked*?!

Two Great Saves From Donnarumma

He crosses
The road with his eyes closed.
The sun has got its hat on.
The Son has got his thorns on.
The fun is really on
When he's off his prescription.

He came off his prescription
In 2021. Since then he's been as
Big as the sun and the sky,
And as low as low can be and as a high
As the entire dictionary. Jesus
Was not naturally conceived, but he

Must have been
Me tooed. It's hard to walk in his shoes,
But he manages it
On the deserted
Downs now they are taking the fair down.
He is going to the pub to watch the semi-final.

Once a part of this and
A part of that
Come together, there will be a final.
The true greats usually find their
Feet and strut their messianic style
In finals, if they can handle it. "The pub"

Was poetic. He isn't even there yet.
The clouds parted and the traffic
Was not compliant this is an SS

RIot: the pilot—collapsed, lying under
Car after car after car—failed
To make the other side again. Whereas

I was watching Arteta's men
Lose, slightly
Further ahead: I didn't stop for him.

Mont Bonc

She's gone.
The soulmate has gone.
I used to zealously use bongs.
I have been on one since day one.
Day one of the universe.
Now I write jealous doggerel.
Jealous of proper verse.
Vigorous berk. Never victorious.
Aimlessly just not losing.
It's not even posing. It's phoney.
The cycles come upon me.
She was a Pinarello. You know that makes me then, don't you—
That wooden puppet fella: in the book the Blue
Fairy said she could almost be my mother. Ermmmmmmmm but I'm in the belly of a whale?

1 to 60 in Five Stanzas

I want to mirror her
Like a toddler. I am the toddler calm yourself.
I want to mirror
Her like a toddler, with my newly

Acquired poetic control. She will fold
Me into her being: I will be nothing
Again. I can't be ten
Again as I have already been that

In another poem. I will be
Nothing, as I should be—as we should be;
Then we can potentially create something
With someone else: a poem

To work on together. Doesn't
Have to be indirect or clever, reader—
Ash! Don't have to bash
The so-called zombie trash, or throw the

Babies out of the bath water
Inconsequentially. Just stop being stuck

Solipsistically—because what really helps
Is giving a fuck about someone else.

A Pocket Full of Rye

I get pain. It's a shame.
I do something else instead. Can't do that every day though.
Still
Click here if you do not want to see this message again.
I'm not offended: I'm hearing what you really mean.
It says more about me.
I want to live in the world, so I visit
Catastrophe and go inside
Her sometimes and grow thick-skinned. Who
You getting thick for?
You.
It's all for you, baby, but you never believe me.
I'm not here really. I'm slightly above my body
In every gallery taking photos of the portraits, endless
Captures I can look at when I'm
Prostrate again next time. Because there is always a next time.
It's bound to happen. I keep telling you. I tick
The tick and the message
Reappears as I keep telling you. I anticipate it.
I bake it in a pie, the birds sing, the king
Counts his money—why not. The maid
Hangs the washing out; and anticipates
The snipping black-
Bird, finally: ducks. And sometimes the king'll sew
The nose back on again anyway
Seamlessly. Sometimes: can you blow it first?

Hold Your Own Horses

My scream finally reached me. Boy
Did it ground my writing! Standing on the
Toes of schizophrenia: I'd
Bite your tongue first, before that
Gossip you'll be
Ouroborosing later lands
For now like confession: what a mess—the worst

Playground ever, the worst body
Of work. Half-deserted streets. The worst soulmate.
All of it had to happen to you! All of it had to happen to you.
All is grey. No one is black. Fine it

Happened but the scream goes so far
Back all I can do is pull it through
Sounding deranged to the tail end.

Dodgyssey

Now what the fuck you reworking: I thought
That was all wrong? What you done?
Come on—what you done? I reckon
You've done something. I reckon

Kidding! I was trying to inspire you.
"Poorpheus"—it could work?
"The Stiff of Sisyphus" hahaha—what *haven't*
You done, eh?

Fuck off I don't care about that; no one
Should care about that anymore.
In fact if they do I know there'll be open

Slots next to yours. Why? Because it's dull,
Love. Me? O… erm… not a lot.
Editing. Working on myself.

Lazaruses

"Okay, I'm going to attempt to drown myself"
—Eminem, 'Role Model'

"If one, settling a pillow by her head
Should say:"
—T. S. Eliot, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'

After Sylvia Plath

I have done it again.
Out to find Ash.
Do not think I underestimate your great concern

Already; if you still feel that way
Now it may be
Forgotten now. I would rather

Be a Jew
In 1942
Than to keep picking you

And you and you.
I am trying to be through with you not
Through to you. Choose

Somebody else, I
Attune, pretend, atone
Offend for the crowd I've

Boned.
Amused shout:

“A melee?”

That knocks me out.
There is a charge
For the eyeing of my scars, there is a charge

For the hearing of my heart——
It really goes
Awry. And there is a charge, a very large charge

For a word or a touch
With trash.
They annihilate decades.

I played naive
To me in
Finding you funny

To deal with. I may
Mean me. Me may me my!
It made me hit the sky.

It makes me hit
The sky *nearly* thinking about those
Times you threaten to

Die, then don’t.
I felt electrified
And like a doughnut.

You strong as anything.
I am me icon.
We swap around.

I am bound to kill myself
Herr. Herr
I cannot eat. My Herr

Is on fire. I am dire.
I am terrified
(I meant to rhyme earlier)

Of going out in case you heat yourself—bare
Of you
Liked to tell you

You Harr going through
With it but didn’t try. The sky!
It’s pupil-black.

You can’t even think—
Don’t even refer back
To the poem

Enough! Snuff
Them out
Your hair and linen. Get back out there, Jack! Hit

The road, jet black
Hearts that carp
On threats. I bet

You won't
Do it: I should have
Said that. I

Want the same number of
Stanzas. As me! I'll
Do it myself: it no

You—it's me! I'm
Going to throw myself in the sea
And drown and come

Back mischievously,
Iconically. I am strongly
For this not being me—

But Here
We
Are. Beware? Me ash me. Five of

You threatened it and you
Had to try
It in

Silence, like a flame-red
Maggot. Me
Are strongy or something of stomach: blocked.

The Type of Skits I'm on You Wouldn't Understand

I've learned everything. I've appropriated everything:
In my bag is a pen and a pad and your kitchen sink.
I'm lying: I don't use a pen and a pad. I'm not sad.
I use my phone. I got a grip. I tap the future of poetry into my Notes app.

I flip flop. Unsurprisingly I get cold feet. I am also crap in relationships.
But if you can't handle me at my worst then you do not deserve
The poet. I drop off. I cheat. One night in the sheets with me
Will be the highlight of your life. Then what are you going to do?

I quietly manage the mood I manifest mining such monstrous poetry.
You don't even know me. Who *is* he? I'm Nikki Grahame.
I'm Jade Goody. I'm the big brother everyone always worries about.
When I'm out the house you'd never tell all this, I assume.

I write what sells. I let you consume it for free. I'm completely accessible
Except when I write ones you need a degree for. Some days I'm rich.
Some days I'm poor. Some days I'm crawling on the floor.
Some days I make you crawl on the floor: I'm a dom—

I'm a sub. I'm in goal. Nothing that came before me poetically even matters anymore.
I'm a two-door convertible. I'm an unstable motorbike that rattles.
I fish for pike and get sharks—whales. Bull. I spin tales
On the M5. I'm dead or alive. I'm dead *and* alive.

You know it's you who spins me round, don't you? I'm both so I have no clue
Whether the box is open or not; and that's why I can be both:
I'm a pussy (sorry (I'm a pussy)). I'm Santa and the tooth fairy. I'm blue, rose, African,
Cubist. Nudist. The rudest (clearly). I don't even bother explaining myself to you lately.

I've got muses I hide inside a hive like a beekeeper:
I'm Otto Plath. I make you mad. OK I'll be my own mother
Scolding me in the bath. Don't mention my dad either. I'm excellent at math.
It probably all adds up for you now with those two lines above. I snuff

Out competitors in stanzas. I'm Peter Pan growing up
Just. I'm Captain Hook. Abu Hamza. I balance myself
Further through Satanic Verses. I then get cursed with a fatwa. Nah—
I won't be referring to the 'rents again: I'm on my own path. Got my own gaff. I convert

Pain only caring for flare: buenos nostrils (I nose). I'm here and I'm there. Couldn't see past
the end of my beer
For years like Mike Skinner. Now I'm Here, There
And Everywhere like I'm on *Revolver*: loadsa ammo—all nearly hollow (my poor rubber
soul!). I'm getting older:
Thick nose hair. These voices appear and pull my mouth

From ear to ear writing like I'm on the gear and I disappear and fear
Not for myself anymore, to be clear; because I watch it all, pause,
And find a clause to end it here, mid-quatrai- I mean! tercet, idiot.

*

But wait—who do we fear for then?
Other poets, dur brain.

<u>Stans</u>

The Marshall Mathers LP
Stopped me from committing

An atrocity: I used to play
'Kim' to… "Gabby Mendy". Bit cringe. I was only eleven!—
Where
Were my parents? Me and Gabby got together

At Glastonbury

A few years later. Then we fell out again;
And I wanted to tie her up
Outside of the bedroom

This time,
And put her in my boot: I knew
I could write about this
By then—but not actually do it—

Because of Eminem. I mean…
I never thought that! I'm the speaker!
And he's
A rapper, containing the sweet.

Windflower in an Episode

"I don't even like rhythm, assonance, all that stuff. You just go on your nerve. If someone's chasing you down the street with a knife you just run, you don't turn around and shout, 'Give it up! I was a track star for Mineola Prep.'"
—Frank O'Hara, 'Personism: A Manifesto'

My mother
Chased me with a knife. I don't know what box to put it in.
I don't know how to document it. I went to every sector
In the whole of society and they pulled the shutters down on me.
They would not record me. I love you. I love you,
But I'm turning to my rehearsals
And my heart is closing

Like a parody
No one notices. The knife made me terrified for my
Verses. My life is amazing. I move through different realities
Over land and sea like Odysseus
Or a Fulbright Scholar: I'm the bees
Knees else I'm in a pit
Feeling absolutely atrocious; I'm above the scene or

Binging on Netflix. Some loser in the pub winked at me about the shutters thing and I…
I'm hesitating over it now, I'll be completely honest. He looked
Dangerous. The poetic Adonis I sometimes play was gored
By a boar though, nearly. God I'm mythical. I need to be reimagined.
I'll reimagine myself! It never happened! I'm rewriting Metamorphoses!
I assume the boar has some unfathomable back story. Hope she's alright. Genuinely.
Aphrodite! Unsurprisingly I am now not yours: I've fucked

Myself. I am not your anemone! I am not quietly waiting for
The catastrophe of my personality
To be anything: I'm making a new one. I'm singing whatever song
Helps. A lot of the time I'm yelping at the old bee
Stings quietly but I know to be getting on with someone else
Alongside this; while the poetry is sometimes
Dragged out.

More Nuance

Maybe they really will keep getting worse and
It is imperative that you get away from them
For your sake and theirs
Not that they will then take the opportunity to start improving themselves

And by the way it is about improving oneself
Without excuse
Fuck your punctuation
You know it so acutely now
It burns in you all day

That you must not have them in your life
And it is screaming at the edge of your skin
And you are screaming at the poem in silence
That burning part of you is
That will not go away and will slowly devour you unless you do something about it

High Quality, Late Maturing

"What the fuck's this guy's problem on the side of me?"
—Eminem, 'Kim'

"But it's alright 'cause you love me
And you recognise it ain't how it should be"
—Arctic Monkeys, 'Star Treatment'

In the library I put my sunglasses on
And walk out listening to 'No. 1 Party Anthem'. I go to Pret
And give the barista the time of his life
In the few seconds I take to order and collect
My 49p filter. I pastiche into the future:
There's nothing else for it. I've got my own cup. I look
At the blue sky and buildings and I am dazzled
By shadow for a bit. Then I pull it together. I'm not a toddler.
With my sunglasses still on I venture
Back to the library. Everything is before me: my fruit;
My laptop. 'Mad Sounds' enter my ear
And I put them here: mandarin—variety
Nadorcott. I'm off
Again to the ceiling
Of the second floor as the philosophy books are really high.
I revert to analyticity. It's easy for me. I'll try
Dungarees at some point too—definitely. It's bound to happen. I'm always practicing.
Behind the glasses is nothing. "At least as deep as the Pacific Ocean".
My filter is outstanding.

Another Create Your Own Adventure

The cold comes like a blanket
Protecting an infant who's bound to visit relatives it doesn't like, one hour
Round trip. But the roadworks

Coming back? It's like a time warp

Visiting now. Ghosts in every bus stop.
Stresses me out
Hearing them bang on and on
About the same thing during the whole

Banquet. Every stop
On the way home too. Gave me a headache—her crying
The *whole* time
In the back? She was wrapped up! While I

Got my head down and drove, freezing
Getting ill: I could calculate it.

Thereof One Must Be

I externalise the gremlins
Inside me then deconstruct them
Giving myself away. But it's
OK because everyone does that—

And I've got a speaker
More intelligent than me, going
Hand-in-hand with his
Schizophrenia down the street.

Wouldn't it be great to
Meet yourself? That's like
Thinking about before
The Big Bang, so-called…: the speaker's

On to *them*. Scare myself?
Not really—it's a poem.
I just use his fingers. Who
Said that? But they *made* me!

Happy Meal Toy

I have these place names
From all over—some high,
Some low. Doesn't matter. People we have lost
And found again in another room
Doing you know what. Well, probably not as well
As us: lunatics—like some kind of fruit
That bruises and complains to a clerk: Excuse
Me, but the skin is bruised. Well of course I picked it!
Not that it's necessarily about the skin; some *do*
Just taste better? I've been misquoted—I just want to grieve
In peace! If you weren't in Finland how could you possibly know: these
Are the kind of lazy generalisations
That sow division. I've also got some metonymies
Around here somewhere I've being meaning to…

There we are. And another ex-lover. Their name
Changed, of course: I'm no… how do you say…
Is it "problématique"? Because it just does. You probably weren't there either—
It's the other side of what the boa- O! Fluent?! I'm…
Well I just didn't expect that, that's all. Not at all! I just thought…
It's putting all this together: makes
My mind drift back to how reckless we could sometimes be—
I didn't mea- How do you say that: "conne"? Hmm—could work. "Unpretentious
But lofty. Plebeians often use it"—you reckon? I'll save it. "Conne de pomme"
Maybe. Some accessibility! The light streaks
Across our steak too: I almost feel
Guilty. How long have you been in the city then?
Wow OK: do you always count
In days? What made you think I might like that?
Well you must have said it for my sake; for the…
Pioneering work? I suppose it could be
Pioneering. Neoteric. I just completely forgot where we were
Or what we were doing and who I wanted to be. Who I wanted *us*
To be. Sometimes you completely allude me. Bore me.
Would it align with the headshots though? I'm questioning
Whether we'd even have steak? Right—the streaks;
Have you got that list of bridges? "Yes. But shall we
Cross those when we come to them—wink"? Do you realise where we're going to submit this?
Fuck they're here!: though you come to my dish
In overalls on the Charles… "a lot"?! Beaucoup? "Beau conne", right—dazzling.

<u>You Don't Need a Weatherman</u>

I unconsciously project the parts of myself I'm extremely uncomfortable with acknowledging
Onto Jordan Peterson. How I hate him.
I return to the moods of my moon.
I return to the moons of my mood.

Hmm. I've read a bit of his work and watched some videos: he's not as bad as I thought.
Andrew Tate came along though. Phew!
I unconsciously project the parts of myself I'm extremely uncomfortable with acknowledging, bla bla.
But within my current framework of bounded truth I *know* he is abhorrent in many ways, and I don't think my views on this will change. I really do *feel* this. Still, I'm barely aware of anything he's actually said.

I return to the moods of my moon.
I return to the moons, bla bla. Only I'm starting… I'm starting to think
It's just a moon? And I'm quiet
For more than a few minutes. My thought then stabilises

For a few hours sometimes which then gains congruence with my emergent beliefs, values, and what I want to do. Beyond what my avatar
Is playing out, I mean. This all feels separate from the psychodrama flying past in my head at all times: those characters
Are going silent more and more. I also *sense*—because truth is pretty messy otherwise—

that I…
We may have drafted these stanzas ourselves.

Parasympathetic

Everybody's gone haughty.
I'll just get naughtier
Because of it it is not my fault.
Cerebral haughtiness
In hyperly-aroused bodies. It's why
I pretend I can fly! It's why
I find a word in poetry, like
"Hauteur" in Seidel's poem 'Poems
1959-2009' in his collection
Nice Weather—and I run with it
For a new poem. So glad I have never been
Haughty. So glad I am not as naughty
As me! It's OK some people are just thick and
Do not understand me; wait—a hauteur
Wouldn't say it like that: brainless peasant.
Horny and haughty: there's something in it.
I'm the horny part because you are
Exceptional and strokable with a stroke on the horizon.

Pox

I have the right
To act like a maniac
In a poem and for other blind
Maniacs to stay away from me because of that.

I pull a rabbit
Out of my trousers. Yeah that's exactly what I meant.
I sit by the canal after pulling it out and all the zombie trash
Walk past, almost

Crawling. They shuffle their fringing feet! Argh!
And they're getting away from me. They get far away.
It is like they are not even blind. Doubt
They have a rabbit to look after though.

The rabbit has myxomatosis. I love it
The mostest but it causes me to dote
Only on myself because it's in my trousers.
Good job I wasn't a maniac before I threw myself in the canal though! O how the zombies
never knew!

Ungrateful Cunt

Hi it's you. I just wanted to say
Erm
Well isn't this a bit embarrassing!
Look I've been projecting, OK? You're

Aware of it. A part of me is worried about where this'll leave you too?
O it's OK: it left me here!
Actually it left me ages ago
In another poem! Where

Are you going with this one? You look
Around the room and project
The feeling still there
Onto me: I feel

For you!
But then it goes to me—
Who ain't 'ere anyway!
And then it goes away.

After Mains

I'm nearly on the floor but I'm on the sofa.
I'm slightly higher. It's progress
That's not the best, yet. I don't want to eat
And I want to cheat
To jump ahead of what my family
Did not do yet. I have to swallow something.
If I don't swallow something I'll stay hungry.
The window is always exciting what with the moon
And wildlife and the abundance of foliage to

Clinically classify: I want to know the stench
Of every flower. The prospect is enough
To get oneself up, though it is problematic: I tend
To get obsessive with my habits—I'd end up
Sorting the whole garden! Then what would Eve do?
O well at least I'd be up—jumping off
The sofa. Where she wants and needs me! Not a lot I
Can do from here. My dinner is burning, it's
Cooked. But I had to swallow something!

*

I eat a little so I don't sound delirious.
It's serious
Charity to sit on the sofa and not
Devour everything the second you think of it: stop
Cowering. You know what you meant. I'm spent—
Empty—which is very good of me.
You lie
Alone and are lonely and then you are not.
It is a serious

Job, is this—writing what you are thinking.
It keeps you in the pink. It stops you going blue.
It doesn't stop you going blue if the food

Gets stuck in your throat though, that is for sure.
But that is what counting your breaths is for, before
You get up some more to
Level the score by standing literally
On the floor in the room you are in, unlike your great-
Grandparents that could not eat nuffin.

Story

"Or maybe I imagined it all
I've played to quiet rooms like this before"
—Arctic Monkeys, 'One Point Perspective'

We had a family friend: Auntie Irene.
She wasn't our real Auntie.
She was more like an Uncle!
She wasn't my favourite Uncle.
She probably would be now!
But she died, scot-free.

Even Cheaper With a Keep Cup!

"I do what I wanna do
I say what I wanna say, when I feel, and I
Look in the mirror and know I'm there"
—Kendrick Lamar, Anna Wise, 'Real'

I rush to Pret
Standing on all the homeless heads
That have been raped
All these buggered men
It drives me insane
Why aren't they in prison where
There's rhyme there's reason
At least the filter's still a quid in London

The world keeps turning
Lame line; but filler!
I wish they'd all stop
Trying it ruins my theory
I can't explain it
I do not give a fuck at all really

I Sat on the Roof

Eurydice returned to her father
Nothing will ever be harder
You're dying to hear another lecture
"Sorry, class: I don't have one on Electra"

You're in a muddle; just yesterday you were jumping in puddles
It isn't subtle either, the knowledge—the pain. Unbearable
There's nowhere to go and there's no one to tell

This is hell; you knew it was some kind of weird spell—

You knew something odd was going on
Now you can't let her know and you can't let her go
Half the time the two of you were having fun, weren't you?
It's everywhere now and the sky is blue and it reflects the sea

"Not me! This couldn't happen to me, surely, could it?!
O look: the clouds are waving for me"

But It's as if I Had

I'm in a shame spiral.
It is beguiling.
You wouldn't even notice it in real life.
I don't even tell him.

I am a pen. I'm Alberto Caeiro.
It's alarming to be alarmed.
I am going to be somebody else
One day. It is weird to think.

To make an impossible poet—to then
Try to live by them:
No thanks. Why dig
Your own grave

As you are leaving it? Your body is leaving it?
Alberto? Yeah? No.

Choosing Your Voice

"I don't have to listen
To me!" The child
Sets up a camera
And walks into traffic.

Argument for Pumps

Yeah I suppose it is pretty cool
That you can tie your own shoelaces? ERM I can tie
Mine myself, thank you—just point it out if
You must? Look I'll tie them n-

Don't clap! I've been able to do it
Years though the clapping does feel pretty good, doesn't it: could I...
Could I maybe
Do it again at the next one?

FUCK you know I can't remember feeling this nervous in long, long time: hopefully
I can tie them again! And even half as well as you do it would be so special to me. O stop!
Right...

That didn't feel as good. Hmm.
I tied them in exactly the same as I did before too? Maybe…
Maybe they all just hate shoelaces! Or maybe there's a global structure against sh-
Ah. Right I see. O don't worry: I know *exactly* what I'm tying next time.

If It Helps This Is Happening as Well as Not Happening?

You let it happen to me and so now you are being pinned down too and forced
Into reading all these. You literally have to read them all. You've no choice.
Modern life is exceptional in the West. Almost perfect.
You pick four lines you like and make a stanza and ignore the rest.

Nor did you just let it happen: you might as well have been
But look at the discipline it has given me.
It could take you decades to find your
Stanzas. Previously I'd have broken me differently.

This is actually what I am I am like. This is what I am.
This is the I am of me as you are experiencing
Him in your choosing to pin him down. These
Four choices were absolute shite this time. Think of the options!

No, Ashley. No. We will not rest on our laurels
As that would have left us immoral in a hovel. But only because morality
Negated, rhymed. Bloody hell, Ash: you going to do that every time?! I tell you what, every
time
You roll your eyes I will make me rhyme so I am not pinned down on the floor anymore.

God I Was Cringe

I've navigated every gate of shame: I'd fuck a goat
For these notes and you'd still try laughing
Me away again and I'd be out
On the street again the next day on my winning
Streak with these leaves you can't believe flow out
Of me so easily like he fucks himself on purpose, at times,
To gain these three-way rhymes coming between me
Myself and Hi who are you? Horny?
The devils here too, Billy. Fine.
Though that makes five? Octa-
Moron, then, more like. How? Polly's
Gone: can't you tell? It's hot in
Hell and I smell eight limbs, nine
Brains spazzing out trying to spell: help—
The goat don't flo-
Hang on—I've got a "boat"
I've just wrote with ors
To bore between you and yours' bor-
Ing choices—either snoring
Words or death: I'll take
Neither of them and build delicious new
Schemas over fallacious excluded middle
Beavers… just to test myself instead: damn—catching

Water; but I can't go
Under with a ro-
Tunda like mine that flows so blunderless even when 8 of the 9 rodentia just
Take the piss as the pen
Pusher (octo)pusses out what shouldn't be allowed at
27… 26 minutes to twelve; so I force
Them down so my ink mouth counts
Sheep instead for a bit in my
Head 'til it sleeps before peaking again and
Again and again sounding in-
Sane but it's just channelled herding minus
Blame because look what feeling the pain gains.

Switzerland

What would get me the sack
I hate my boss. She's a twat
I'm joking. I don't think that
And she definitely doesn't think I'm a twat

This poem will not be as long as my email signature
I support everything in the whole wide universe
Aliens4Earth
My name is spelt "Ashley"

If it's not externalised then how will I know when it's gone?
Sometimes… I… still think I still think it? Does that mean I'm an alien?
I'm sure I've thought she's a twat at least once in my life—
O well. She's looked at me really weird plenty of times. It's exciting!

O but she definitely has. I can tell. I can prove it!
Because I can read minds with my alien mind reading thing that spaffs my mind all over
everything while I'm hovering in the sky

Discotech

Years ago I picked up a mirrorball: "Poor mirrorball!"
I thought it was a globe
Spinning in space, I mean. It wasn't on the ceiling; I

Would put it on the ceiling
And we would dance, I meant. It turned out to be
A mirrorball that could spin

On its head and dance and
Crash and I was not a very good lead
Apparently I was a brilliant

Partner in
A criminal, how could I.
It was then suspended from a beam

Until I got home and it wasn't. It had thousands

Of facets and turned out to be a novelty
Item and a science lesson. It spins above
Its own party still and gets picked up by everyone.

Spidey Senses

The palimpsestia stomach
My nightly crocuses,
Gossamerly-spun. Yet the tummies causing
Despair, still come. Why am I a sky, spread
Across everything? Why am I not on the right side?
There is a fairness
That hides itself; with a flash it may
Expose the tightrope

Walker's vital net. And then I am back
In the web, planting
Flowers for us, reader. Yes on the
Silk. These silky threads! Writing on my
Belly. On my bed! Waving my
Daffodils in the air.

Literally For You

You've made it
This far so you'll come back
A little less that. I spoke to them!
I didn't. They sent me

A message through… Exactly.
They didn't. Doesn't mean
You won't be a jellyfish though.
But it does. That's not what it says.

Accessible

No one has ever said "I am a fucking maniac"
Like this before. I am so chronically
Obsessed with the half-experience
I am having it is like I am warning you
That I have little control over myself—it's like
Half of me needs to jump up and down for myself
And the world's attention at the same time.
But I am gathering this; and no one has ever

Articulated "I was a fucking maniac" like
I will be doing in my future collections,
Through instrumental layers of irony and
Humour that I'll have little control over
Either—like the poems just wanted to get me over
The line without me.

Are You Exploring Your Own Anxieties About Writing and Intellectual Credibility Here?

The ivory tower of my mind
Spills these beans, gets
Black eyed purposely, while real
Me stands in his tracksuit
Outside Woolworths
Kicking a ball against

The shutters: what else is new. Certainly not us.
You've left the high-street, donned
Another faux-suit to snootily
Snub those beneath you, you think;

As you masturbate over a line break, fake
An interest in French cinema with
Philosophical dinner guests, writing
Poetry from the head, not the chest.

In Which Everything Could Be Captured by Pooh

'Twixt my legs comes my tail
Knowing its place
Poetically, whilst I Tigger
Or Eeyore outside. A Robin

Comes to rest on the fence. If some cunt
Thinks it's daddy I judge
Their need for fictions
Different to mine: I open up

Into poem I am bear
Shitting in poem. Sometimes. Characters
Come together crying out
Treacle: this is the House

In Which I drop a
Kanga and Roo it—I come back
Through back down
With my balloon afterwards; 'twixt my legs…

Sneeze

How good I feel I am is directly proportional to the bad
Of others. Not the poem of the poetry, silly!—
That's just how you are reading it: I've said it
Before. But O well. I might not have shared that yet.

I get nervous as the lines get to the edge of the
Screen, but I don't really: I just do
This. Still, you can sense there is more control
Than that. More than they have anyway, eh—the

Maniacs! They are not good like me and you, with our
Words that keep us safe from the big, bad
Unpoetic out there. When your worldview is in place
It flows out more easily. Especially when you are

Actually being me! Only it is conversational, you will
Agree, thinking that has some moral weight: it don't.
It do not. I do not care about your little blue dots. I
Care about the blue dot only if we get rid of the snot.

Looking Back Out the Wind(ow)

"2) Do I stand up from it a better man"
—Kenneth Koch, 'The Art of Poetry'

It turned out she was German.
She lived in Berlin.
It was a burden
Flying to Berlin

From Alicante
With no money,
Considering I had not actually met
Anyone from Berlin and had written and

Posted this before I had even flown to Spain.
What a pain.
I am insane
Because it rhymed again. I like

Finding rhymes
That are crass sometimes. I like finding them
In hostels when I am making things up
About the things

I am actually about to do in real life
(Go on holiday to Alicante, say) when I am actually
At home and it is still three weeks until I arrive
At the hostel. I'm impossible but I'm also not. The plot

Doesn't thicken much when it's
Thickened like this in advance. I'm in a trance, but…
Yeah exactly he's not really. What exactly is it I'm
God I feel better.

Seriously, Sneeze

I cannot believe you thought that. Sorry I can.
Sorry about that. Sorry you thought that.
Sorry that must have been really difficult.
It must have been really hard.

No nor me. We cannot not believe that. It's mad.

I don't really know what to say now!—erm:
Maybe they did something over there? Yeah.
Yeah! Look what they did over there!

Do you think we are thinking about the same
I have no idea what you are talking about: look
At this poem. Look at his poem!
At least yeah exactly.

It must have been really hard.
Sorry that was ages ago.

Be Quiet(!)

"We are expelled into the dust of our decisions"
—John Ashbery, 'Spring Cries'

You shatter and scatter
The DIDs of your life

And see you are outside for the first time: "It's unsafe!
Heinous! Anyone is capable of anything!

And yet
I am still so holy? Best to protect myself

From *them*!" A rather
Embarrassing few years

Will follow, at best: you could
Stay in that hole——before

You eventually learn
To mostly be quiet.

Knoben

Sexual abuse is everywhere
And you can't help but stare.
Would a comma have helped there?
Probably. People get stared to death. This

Sounds atrocious, not that it really matters.
What's the matter? I'm psychically frozen,
And I cannot feel where I am going
Because there is a feeling that I cannot bear

Nor grasp. Though, these stanzas…
No. No it went again. I am going to be remembered
For the wrong reasons, on paper, and then not.
I'm frozen to the spot and there's not

A lot to be gotten from being a knoben

Like this, in my lifetime
At least: I'm thinking Van Gogh. Yeah.
Yeah I reckon so too, unfortunately.

Reading a Piece of Paper

But is it topping up my narcissism? My
Entitlement? The word "title"
Is in "entitlement"—I know this game.
The zombie's can't play this game.
They'd never work out the game
Of being able to read. Sounds obvious, no?
Well they've got you then too! O with
Whatever it is

In this moment: we are waiting for the experts
To tell us, as a family. And that will be
On a piece of paper too; and we will
Live inside that too, perhaps… even…
Acronymically? I know! I'm so excited. *Too*
Excited! Only that's four now; and I'm unsure.

Red Rum

I walk along having
To pretend that I am dead,
But instead I am more alive
Than the equine that only survive

Because of the life I provide them now
And then so they can thrive a bit while I
Live a divinely touched poet's life all of the
Time. I am not just a gadfly but a botfly chiming

Inside the poor horses' skins while they can only
Think about lowbrow and tragic things like when do
The bins need to go out. It must be supremely difficult not being
Supremely gifted like I have to be in my dream of being everything to all

Of society because I myself am like Socrates but it's where some of us need to be so others
Can reach some semblance of reality which they cannot achieve without me pretending I
am a literary deity.

Plants

Ah go on then—why the hell not!: My ex
Is having a lesser experience
Than me. What?! What's the problem?
I'm not- Eh?! I want you to analyse it!
But I'm literally para- I'm not laughing!
This is ridiculous—I'm saying…
I'm putting the same as you
Only in less words!

Oi—why the fuck did you bring me here: I was happy
Golfing. In fact *you* were happy golfing!
What did you put then? What's that—a plant?
I didn't know you liked plants!

You're joking—he didn't...
He didn't tell you that, did he? Hahaha. Well he's
Lying, that's why!—not *once*
Have I seen him in the garde-

Eh?
O.

Yeah she was a bitch.

Brothers, Sisters, Can't You See?

I was beaten to a Pulp. I suppose the tone of the poem doesn't really matter after that!
Haha—no: I didn't mean that!: "Jarvis Cocker"? You silly twat!
I suppose getting my name wrong doesn't really matter after that either!
I suppose cutting the line

I'm at work, berking.
The poem is berserk
In its Pencil Skirt. It's working though.
It is actually working again. I don't even know what it is—it's

Whatever you're thinking! It actually is whatever you think.
Look if you think this poem is Different Class, then that has nothing to do with me.
If you think it's crass you're a twat.
I was splattered on the floor but I'm not anymore:

It was ages ago! The nineties! Good for
It's not even good for poetry! A good reference point to have in the back of your think so you
are never
On the floor being walked all over all over again.
"Tardis Cock"?! That's pretty funny actually.

Cannon Fodder

I insinuate you are a paedophile
And lose 150 billion dollars.
Most of my poems are cannon fodder.
I regret what I said. Please buy shares.

The money isn't important to me.
The poems are not important to me—
The freedom is: I am trying to be free.
I literally go to the moon and you are jealous—

We need to colonise other planets.
We need to work out what a man is

So it rhymes better. I've got 150 billion daughters
And sons: sons are better. The poem doesn't matter—

It changes nothing
When they only work by whim. I am not publishing
Anything of note but I am literally flying. I literally
Don't watch the news because it doesn't apply to me

Poetically: I'll worry about it when we land.
I'll worry about it when we stop buying everything
That keeps them going: it has been going on
For centuries, only now we have socials. It is totally

Engrossing—*if* we keep watching: stop watching—
Stop reading my poems.
You are cannon fodder.
Gandhi literally stopped buying salt.

Not Doing It So It Doesn't Happen

I wake up dysmorphic
And make it poetic: it's pathetic—you
Saw what I did

Back there, didn't you?
I stood in my boxers, didn't
Fancy it and gave it to you.

We didn't do this; I wish I'd have done that

As a teenager (twenty eight) when our
Hair was a state (I *thought*: you looked

Great, I'm sure: it rhymed: it doesn't
Matter—get outside). I literally

Stop looking in the mirror
When I feel like this, at times,

Still. Then we forget about it.

Moanus Ponies

They're crumbling, they whisper.
And the hurt people…
Don't hurt people, apparently!
And logic's overthrown—

Logic too. They do not need
Fixing and the thing that hurts them
Needs fixing but they are not
Broken. This house

Is fundamentally broken,
But only half of the bricks
Break it and they break
And do not break the other

Half that are not
Crumbling while they must
Whisper it loud and
Psychotically, they whisper.

"Do You Need a Few More Minutes?"

Stormzy made you think about it; and he's a Redcar
Grandma's saviour. "BE THE CHANGE" tote
Bag: noted—because I needed a
Line to keep going in this

"Indie" cafe (*k-af*): I am waiting
On an upturned barrel: "Builder's tea, ple-" I am given
Electroconvulsive therapy. A branded cap.
I map

My vision, bored, but focused. Pocus.
Art is meaningless
In these moments before

Caffeine—their humble (£8) pie: my collective
Unconscious squints at papyri figures; when I could just
Buy into it: "Fine then! Flat white."

Do I Gander?

Then they become all these deadweight dead objects after mating with me:
Ermmmm—fair enough! Odd confession. Though it helped me
No end: it was about time
I got well and stayed away from the plague house.

Some hold vigils beside pools
They now like. I believe
What they're looking at,
Before they give it to me on the page.
It's either so far advanced

Or millions of years prior
To collation—something to do
With kinbaku? I don't know: I'm dead! Fix! Deluded
Into thinking I'll get well. But whatever
Works for the goose…

Clever Cloggers

You carry around your lies
And see them in other peoples' eyes,

And that makes you mad
At them and then you will literally go mad

In old age and get ill because of it,
But at least you never sounded like a poetic maniac.
At least there was always someone else
To look at and think, “I can’t believe

They are doing that,” or,
“I wonder if they still love me back,” before
You recall for a second something bad
You did before you put a lid on it again

To manipulate someone else in a poem
By turning them into a fish or something, clever clogs.

I Was Something of a Hagfish Myself

I ran along the canal burning off
Cackles at my self-improvement from

Previous broken dredges, and in the
Shallows I could make out

The eels, soaked in the sludge still, invasive
Swamp eels adapted to low

Oxygen oozing in and out the sludge and
In and out the sludge flicking

Mud at the runners——before
It rained: the runners were washed; the canal

And all its trash broke
The banks. Can eels mate with rats? A poem

For later. The moist of the
Swamp survive on land; another

Runner flows past, on one—
Slips: into the filth both hands

Open straight in. Will he learn
The current? With much

Training I improved
My splits.

Just My Job Five Days a Week

Not today, contract of employment: I’m a comet!
It’s difficult being the only one able to *properly*
Hurtle through space at a zillion miles an hour

Holding a vase and a fruit bowl. I know others

Believe they're doing it too but they ain't—not like this.
Mad, really: you are currently reading the only cosmic
Snowball of frozen gas and dust—from the ten billion people
That have ever existed—to write poetry from the edge

Of the solar system without being trapped in narcissism. Everything glows
Like a pear here. Claire(!)
In HR is massively dysfunctional: I'll try again with her soon. Bless her.
But how can I go back to that when I'm

Eating lychees on the moon? To think
I thought that love for another was anything ever haha. Gave it a little go though, didn't
they—
What a bloody mess that was! Their feet pointed out when they walked.
OK let me give you a detailed account of how I've slept for the last ten thousand
darknesses.

100 Seconds

Faber and Faber are ringing me now—
They want a memoir
About the porn star! Fucking hell.
I was only messing about. I thought it was obvious!
I thought you'd be able to tell!
Haha this is mad though: I could hardly even spell
Five years ago. What flow and
Tomfoolery now. And fucking! What! I'm not joking!
This is actually real! This one

Doesn't even have a didactic subtext, unlike
The rest: it's only an iteration that
Came to me after a meditation. You might
Even find it irritating: I do the line
Breaks on the spot, mate. I'm blocking out
The moon because I am thirty-six years of age,
And a slither of me actually thinks this could make me
A porn star. I know! Better than believing I'm now a
Horticulturist though, isn't it! You'd see through that.

Peachless

The bottleneck is so colourful.
He cannot make out the label
From so far away today. He wonders

If this will go together: he skipped
Lunch, and presumed himself
Still to be working
In the office. The remember whens
Buzz by like cute little flies or
Newspaper clippings for the

Actually no: for references; but he picked
A career that wouldn't require these.
But then there's the fire—I see him on a higher floor
With the fire; and there's a fortuitous
Connection to childhood; and there is a baby
And there is bread and if he
Specifies matters too much,
He will be toast. This appears in everything
Ever. When will it go? And

She makes her metronomic way
In and out of the wings. He thinks of you

Out there, this low
Grade testing theatre, the sight of much
Pigmentation for this
Valley we cannot pass
And cover. Could it only be
One view? Time

Is a hungry device,
Like the fire and dough. The settled and full
Stomach does not concern itself
With any of this, nor
Will the teen now tided over,
That doesn't even wonder how they got here.

*

Mini break and a cry the next day.

Might Be Your Current Sod

In the fog I wasn't very good. Good
Job there's no good or bad
From here anymore, just the avoidance
Of sad, and fudged in rhymes,

And not being thousands of different people
At different times. If you are rolling
Your eyes you might be in a fog. I
Might be your current sod

Object-choice. It is steadily unfolding
All of the time—arrival. It feels tidally
Important, but it really isn't: you will probably agree
With book burning conceptually

After it, for a bit. At least on paper! You were dancing
In the heather in your head, pretending
To adult externally instead. And you looked
Like nothing as no one was watching, were they.

My Head

I know what you're going to say: "Ash—get lost;
Fuck off." But Gottlob Frege's just rang me up
Saying he fancies his chances against

Gödel's, "Weird diagonals," he said.
"But that's Cantor's proof," I said, "applied
Successfully by Gödel to demonstrate his incompleteness theorem

Nonetheless." He wasn't happy with that.
"Smart arse," he said. "But still it
Proves that any sufficiently complex system can't

Prove itself, basically—and I'm still right fucked off with it."
"What about Russell's paradox?" I said. "Didn't that
Prove that the hairdresser can't cut their own head off

Or something?" "You're a numpty!" he said. "I'm a hairdresser
In heaven—and I'll cut your *feet* off!" "Well obviously
Not," I said. "Because this is the bottom and 'My Head' is the top and I've written the lot."

Fitting Titles (Thrown Away the Post-It Note Now)

Needing another bookmark, I looked
Along the bookshelf, and one
Stuck out of
Dostoevsky's *Notes*
From Underground and
The Double—a folded up
Post-it note I'd found: "I

Adore you
❤️
X X X X X

Enjoy your week &
Rest & feel
Wonderful"

Not read that in ages.

Do Not Alight This Side (Open Return)

The body says not: sigh.
She's hot

But the timings off.
Only half Si-

Enna or Liv
Anyway. O and half

Famous: I better stop.
Cadence

In this fog though: row-
Boat seagull; all

Out my window. Logs;
Imposter

Gap tree. I'm now
Lost. Not replied

In weeks—who's boss?
Hours

Before I
Alight: no one's surprised.

Long

The child'll make use of the beautiful object to play the grief through—don't worry;
While you sit at your nine-to-five
While the object cuts itself at home; and it's all very mundane

How history's defeated:
Once you've read the story
The film's not quite the same.

More

Back to the safety of reductive toxicity
Last night with the repetitive

Toxic fruit Echo in dreams: felt like lidocaine—in bed
Sweating it through again; pungent

Stenches and sounds of performativity:
Not quite getting there; move on——

This evening open mic king,
Personality down to three pages

Of bullet points, a handful
Of near-steadying side eyes in the phone,

Each child dropped (Polly?
Pathetic); tears

Do the needful through a fixed stare, blunted
Affect poised to reign a grabby tongue.

Flexible Workspace Booking System

He is trying (minimising these—
Whispering through a single megaphone more) but she had four

Shots of tequila last night and was sick in her mouth
Before swallowing it. He'd like to quit this job (discover

Love and respect for the reader
(And me)) which would make it easier, presumably,

To have a creative plan he stuck to; but more importantly,
To have love and respect for the reader—yes:

(Come on); but no really I mean
One mouth ~~optimally~~ simply

Able to relax and smile, despite what it overhears
Here—at night—which creates that random

Megaphone with its little wave
From far away as his back remains facing

Everyone waving too, presumably, beneath their
Reclaimed lumps of the throat,

For we have deadlines.

Emily Tries

That really is a lovely skirt; goes
With the dereal-

Isation you've met me with I
Don't want to know, thank you,

What you don't know you
Don't want to know yet either.

Yursh

You know, I'm something of a contingency plan myself. Yes.
Yursh. Got these few lines
I band together
On the reel with a hook

To catch… frameworks. Yursh—self-
Contained frolics away
From the trough.

Then I collapse into myself, leave the scheduled talk,
Ignore my chosen people for months.
Nah—piece of piss

To be honest. I just think
Of every face I've ever known
In one go, plus this
Shadow and someone will agree.

Blind, Playing Operation

My survival rival's vital organs being rifled through to keep them alive, procedures
I cannot be bothered to Google today. But I'm doing
OK. Of course I am doing
Tremendously well. But you understand.

Once I get a line and then a stanza, I can wonder
What to do: I want to get to four-
Four-four-two. What would
This particular speaker do?

Get it down to only needing four-two—that's what!: I am literally
Blind, playing Operation. I am operating
The scalpel with filthy hands and there are
Millions of nurses around me, naked, obviously——

I am literally in Spoons performing open-
Poem surgery which'll afford me a few more pumps.

Optimisation

More people unfollowed me when I
Parodied their narcissism
Than when I parodied someone not
Giving a fuck about raped men sleeping in the street.

Literally Hamlet

I'm in Henley-in-Arden par-
Laying it on thick
Looking thick, nervous
About getting myself out of it

(I'm not really): I'm a maniac—
The brackets
Chat to the main bit.
You should try it!

Wootton Wawen:
I don't know how to say that—
Can I go back
And edit it? Yes

I can. I can edit the past.
I am literally deleting the past, letting
Him go fast

Here, looking like a twat, enjambing

Badly on a screen
On a train, to the RSC
To see *Hamlet*
Hail To the Thief.

Give me a minute: I wasn't
Allowed to speak! I hope you don't like people
Not being allowed to speak? O—but you do
Like that: you've unfollowed me.

Titleless

I open up the penitentiaries
And hand each prisoner a copy of the *Duino Elegies*

As they leave. I fly back into the sky
Satisfied knowing everyone is as free

As whatever I used to be because now I am not me I am whatever
They need me to be within

Space and time, unfortunately. I was aiming to be outside
Of it but that's not possible yet even though I was talking about myself

In the third person for a bit but that person does not exist
Anymore like I said so I reluctantly use "I". Clyde

The serial burglar has just robbed me of my wings,
So I am falling again, falling,

Falling into his arms removing my every-
Thing so he can have and be whatever else I was previously wearing as well ow.

Steaming

"I'm talking about the way poetry made me free."
—Frederick Seidel, 'Drinking in the Daytime'

I had no one to mirror
And was fucked. I'd rather be Lemn Sissay!
Now I'm here and now I'm this.
It's mahoosive and genius. Life in poetic: it's nearly

Spastic but I'm not an idiot
Like I was in the clouds
Counting the stars and equationing them,
Equating them with science they had not even been.

I practice and slapstick. I am bang average
Underneath it like everyone else.
Imagine if writing bought me a house though haha.

By then I'll probably be wishing I hadn't opened

My mouth because no doubt I'd have created hell
For myself. But then it wouldn't actually be hell for me in the same
Way the stars and the mirror are not: I would not actually
Have to face hell because I am the whole wide universe with nowhere to turn—I turn the page and play here instead and release the spasming gears that speak along fearlistly.

*

It is hard to
Waste my talents
Like this when I am more ginormous
Than literally

Everything which means I am having more of an experience than everything too. Are you
Like that? O but you are. Though you could
Not be: it might stop you being absolutely
Insufferable

In suffering—in dissociation. Associate
With something else and leave
The house inside a suit
That is not you—maybe do it in a poem;

And eventually you will be flowing better and not
Groaning about language that is only there to kick start. "Lick
Start": my digits got it wrong at first. Things can go wrong
At first but then we can get them bang average and play with the ~~stars~~ scars (because he was brought up in care).

<u>You Aren't</u>

The facilitator of the group nods with his tearless cry face
Then we say "Let me be well" as a group
Silently in our heads. He has no idea what he's doing but he pretends he does. He really believes himself.
Once Nigel next to me breaks through a smidge more of his self-absorption he is going to be a danger to society.

I quit and sit with myself.
I dream the future.
I exaggerate and tell people an embarrassingly small percentage of my experience
Like everyone does. I take six thousand steps forward

As carefully as is possible when you're obsessed
With your own hysteria and then I take
Five thousand back and try to minimise the days off
While I coagulate in agony *temporarily* so I can get back on track as quickly as possible without indulging the wrong parts

Too much. Weirdly it works itself out when

You aren't.

Marginalised Voice

Schizophasia
Does not phase me. Borborygmi
Multiplied by pi filling the page
Is a circumference

Of nonsense I won't infer; for I
Must be heard. Burp! Absurd? Nay! High
Horse: you hear
Meh? (Like "me", but "may".) Get out

My way when I'm feeling lazy.
I'm dropping a clanger.
I'm a scat singer. An atrocious poet

And I do not leave the house.
I'm a mess and a lout and spout
Crap that means nowt: I've now circled back around—logo

-Rrhea! I've ruined the stanza! The sonnet!
I'm on it! Tin and phonics: I'm drunk
On histrionics! I can't hear! The runs over

My three minutes mitosisly: there's loads of me
Lost in thoughtlessly
Lost in thoughtlessly
Lost in thoughtlessly

It's not me 'cuz I'm 'ere. The poem has some kind of disorder.
Yeah a juge inhustice: I've fucked this. Wasted. Pasted from Wikipedia. All my kin smear shit
all over the walls, I fear know. Right weirdos.
Sigh—fine: I have a voice saying I do not have a voice.
Aguerooooooooo.

Mummy

"Never knew me cheatin' on you would come back to haunt me"
—Eminem, 'Kim'

I give young woman advice
To compensate for not being very nice
To my first girlfriend. She's rich and
Fit and doesn't care about me advising
Achingly beautiful younger women now (she cares
A lot, but not as much
As you). Psychoanalysis
Taught me this trick O and by the way, the

Achingly beautiful younger women

Repay me
With their bodies, the speaker says. He… Give him
A minute—he's deciding: the tricks again——he
Plays with
Their bodies until they release
Pain bodies. This isn't a hobby. It's real work.
This is real, ladies. And you should watch

Who you are glowing
For and changing the trajectory of your life on.
Sometimes they sing a song
Afterwards without even noticing. Sometimes
The overwhelm of being with him is
Overwhelming and they strike him, but I'm thick-
Skinned. The first girlfriend
Was unbelievably tolerant. It's a shame

He had to leave her to save the world:
You can hear this in their tone
Of poetry, can't you—all of this; every
Compensation playing itself out.
I'm joking! He's playing out of his skin!
I play them out of their skin, away
From their violent boyfriends! Though I'm not even in
This one: I'm inside her "advising", wink.

Left To Right and Down

Depends on the temperament, doesn't it,
And who you made up of yourself
Yesterday and who they wanted to lie to, love,
What their favourite food was for the day or how they

Like to immerse themselves in the experience a little
Too much, or not. How formal they feel. Whether
Today's a day for flats or heels?—this peculiar
Employee you've become, for other

Consumers (I'm afraid), that can put the
Chairs out without thinking and make coffee
And sleep at night serving this thrice-made tiffin
That was once something very different: how you

Confuse yourself with the consumer, at times. But,
With a steady exhale, you can still make it.

Undecidable Monument

With kindness, you have to learn to look away

While I decimate your psyche
From here with what I remember

Of that passage. That's right, mister—gossamer
But not. I'm erm…

Struggling
To square that shared epiphany, to be honest.

We can not tell them: sure! I was thinking the same
Synonym. Let's go for it! The not-quite-shoken,

Loves the comparison—
Falls to sleep to his finessed too

Kind of lost our way and these tricks are basic.
I love it! And he'll be livid. *Bettered* anger. Not this and not

Everything but exactly this but not that
Much; like everyone else—only not here.

—

No one said yes
No one said no

You were out your face
There you go!

—

It's erm…

—

Look there's no rush: we've got the hall booked
For a while. Ha!—I prefer

Diplomacy: we've been sent by the government
As you know. That's because business and public health

Always converge
In these reservoirs! Then

What will you do? Fish?
Yeah Agent Smiths. Why not.

—

Everyone's got a pitchfork, perfectly tuned.
They then point at you.

Pftt! I should be so lucky!
And from the stream

Of conscious…

O fuck off: workman's tools!

Master's tools? But we…
You used to call me "mister"!

Flicking Through Stations on the Way to the Farm

We want you to come through the lump in your throat
Using whatever means necessary—and we would willingly
Use whatever means you wish: only you must ask first—but be careful
Of the man who sees and hears only your lump
And aims only to use the one means
Whilst looking over your shoulder for the next lump.

There are certain crumbling monuments in the city
That are kept around by being affixed with healthy parts
Off of newer, less-lobbied statues. Within minutes
These broken up statues can be forgotten, or they can be recycled
For water features or further and further scraps
Of material—or as Queen Amanirenas
Of Kush did with a hacked off head of Emperor Augustus,
They could be placed where the face is stood on for thousands of years.

Scattered By Winds and High Tempestuous Gusts

Ahhhhh the clouds. The sky.
The way things wobble. The way they
Don't understand; don't get to see—
Feel. Of course, it comes

At a price. But that's the big system for you: creating
Ones like me. Hey ho!
But it's still a terrible system; ha—

Geez: I remember when I was a goth. I was a little bit! They're still around?
Slightly different now, aren't they. O I'm all
For it! Doesn't she look free-spirited.
Yeah: maybe she'd like

What we do—shall we ask? Be great
For something like that to turn up. Hey! We're…
Erm—yeah… Yeah you can ask him too! I just went a bit fuzzy then.

Council Meeting

I'm as privy to the boy as you are,
His picking "privy"—tendencies
For silliness; though for some
Of us it's an exercise
In putting down tracks, only
For childish tact to come through—which

We'll then shoo away, some day

For good—such play
Culled for more mystical
Speech. So preach, boy—
Preach! As soon
We'll not hear your tune, I feel, in the chamber.

Gridlocked

I am so good because I am empty. I am nothing.
I am devoid unless she likes something
And then I am mad for whatever that is: a belief. A genre I hadn't considered before. I'm defo not a tech bro.
I'm defo not into crypto. God how I'm so many negations

And lesses. God how I'm so full of yeses
Because I am categorical about absolutely everything in the whole wide universe
Whilst being absolutely nothing but a saint
That wouldn't even say that? I don't even know what to say

To be honest: "categorical"? Pfft. I'll never push you away. I want to kill myself
Now and then 'cause I'm amazing. Look I'm changing
For the even better so you better not

And I better not take that tone because I never would?
God I really am good—I'm so economical with our suds: everyone says so.
I understand what everyone is saying and I'm always paying more than the asking price because that's just how I am? I'm nice?

And Eminents and That

Yeah I love Beckett. Fuck knows mate;
God I'm bored. I was on and off the caffeine
Trying all these different strains, when suddenly—undoing
My Mendeleevian dream; every element I'd captured—

It all just fell away. And then I'm cringing, right,
Because I'd been having all these hypothetical
Interviews in my head. I don't fucking know: magazines
And eminents and that. Thought I had something! Turns

Out I was just punching people. Nah—
Not proper: I dunno why you see me like that!
I was just digging people out, I mean—

In an attempt… to… well… find
A little plot for myself, I suppose.
The fucking diagram I'd done too: you're gena howl.

After Reading One Magazine's Newsletter (Straight Off, No Edits, 38 Seconds)

How do I face the unbearable?
I look away from it like I do everything else—
I do this consciously and unconsciously:

I read the stories
I want to read and I choose to stare
Straight ahead with guiltily wobbling eyes
Past the drug addicts
Riddled with ugliness,
And I buy something I can justify affording in that moment: this

Part is fascinating, because sometimes
I agonise over these choices—which is
Unbearable: can I afford it? Will they love me

More but sometimes I just buy
It because what the hell, you know?

A Notification Relating to Your Claim

I am a personal independence payment—I'm not:
I go to work and poem. If I actually had to do some
Poetry at work I would probably be on long term
Line breaks: I start them to get responses like, "Fuck

Sake, Ash," sometimes. It is literally Labour's fault.
I have thousands of Pounds locked away in a vault
For a rainy villanelle. I will never write a villanelle, even
Though I can spell sensationally well. When I went

To claim my benefits previously I felt a bit silly: I U-
Turned and have just pretended I am not absolutely
Insane since, because I did not like their assessments
That are now about to be ramped up and carried out

Once a week, potentially. I am going to struggle to
Make this six. I will make this stanza one line longer
To pay homage to the vote that will literally not occur
Next week. I am sitting in Pret and preferred to reap
On the sofa, but I literally made myself work to speak.

This Is the Real Me Now

I had the sex
I told you all about and the headshots
And nothing is happening. Rilke is a fucking liar.
How did Berryman and Plath do it? I know that but

I thought something would have happened by now.
There's this whirring
Sound all the time that never stops and the poetry
Was going to eat it all and spray

The excrement of it over everything that didn't fuck
Me the second I looked at it. I *beam*
At every single person at every single poetry event

And I like everything I am supposed to
On social media connected to the local scene so why the *fuck*
Is Ted Hughes not running through me on the daily yet?

O Cap… Fuck

"They don't know what the fuck they're doing": fuck
Me, Donald—I'm trying! I'm only poeting! I don't mean
Anything by it. I am literally taking bits from the news.
I'm pretending I'm you! I don't know what else to do

When we are entering World War III. It is extremely
Missilely, swearing on TV. You are a breath of fresh air
While the maniacs blow up each other's medical care
Centres. Conflict is expensive, but I like it causing ex-

Pletives to come out of the mouth of the commander-
In-chief. "If they want beef, they'll get it": this, too, is
The kind of thing he says. In days he'll be lobbied
To go another way and he will throw his Hanukkah

Away and he'll be wearing a keffiyeh instead. Jew/
Muslim poems are dodgy: I can sense some of you
Trying to pin something on me: you are trying to strap
A bomb to me: O Captain! My commander-in-chief!

I need you to drone all the projecting readers for me!
Thanks, Daddy. The Big D! You are so interventiony
At the moment—it makes me feel like I'm floating: I am
Floating above the Middle East waiting for the police

Of the world to tell me what to do. I haven't got a clue
How it will end, but then the poem will extend me into
Something else until we stop it. But how? By shout-
Ing "fuck" on TV—the like of which has never been seen.

Chaotic Navel of a Pillock

After Rainer Maria Rilke (other others)

I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm Rilke
Pilfering
Structure from others
To tell you about the time I fell

Off the sofa. I ended up in an endless bowl
Of ethically-sourced lentil crisps. Yes I had already been travelling—
Apprentice: take this
In your mouth. Let it be. Let it happen to you; just keep

Going, no feeling… Finally!
I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm
Sure you can work out the rest: gosh

Thanks! But yeah I probably am the best; and like me you'll
Burst like a star: for there is no place
That does not see you. We must change these people.

Sudetenland

"Hey kid, take my advice,
You don't want to step into a big pile of shit"
—Limp Bizkit, 'My Generation'

All these exclamation points
Are not cutting through it
As I have another episode unseen
Aside from HR and rewrite policy

For the day before it slides away into
These liminal spaces I've discovered: allow me
To logically positivise it
For you. *Some* have called it "neo-

Positivism", yes—cute; doesn't *quite*
Capture what we are after? Has connotations.
Look you are obviously fairly new
To the industry and city: maybe

You need to adjust further? As you
Dress how you dress—and all
Is allowed; only you do dress how you
Dress: these

Aren't the streets
No more; you
Need to remove the tracksuit. It isn't explicit—no; but
We write the policy now though, don't we!!! Do you even have any idea!!!

Live Reporting

Where is the Ayatollah? He is
Hiding with his higher power
At an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting
Because it is alliterative. Can we

Believe anything any of them have said? He is in
A state
Of "mental anguish"
It has been reported. Can't relate. I'm posting

The preamblic poems
To this poem too late. The supreme leader is literally
Talking to me, right now, through the BBC's
Live Reporting. BBC Persian. I am casting

Aspersions on anyone that has the nerve
To be on the news. In my view
Dunno: I cannot take it seriously—I am
Living fearlessly

In a bunker funded by Hezbollah: I am
Feeling para-
Military. I'm Lebanese. I am drinking JEEZ, Ali—
Can you not offer me these

Shots? Well I'm trying to share to the group! Trump's
Supreme drone was no fluke, was it: the nukes
Were nuked. O just admit it—we aren't judging. He's
Hiding in a cave beneath the ocean.

Office for Me

"Be ready to be shocked and offended
At university." I literally work
At a university. I change my poems
Liberally from what I originally write, and share

The ones that make me look manically liberal
And full of shite: guess what I'm as high as. Guess
That's the end of the latest totalitarian fad, until the
Next one comes along that I am to blame for, for being

Badass: that is the baddest thing that I will ever
Poem. It is difficult to write when you are not
On the floor, but on the ceiling. It is even harder
To work from here when you only have strong feelings

About absolutely everything getting in the way of everything you are doing: I
Sometimes poeticise; what instinctively needs
To come out does so without trying—ease. Flying? Yes
Please, Pilate. Saying what I think I *should* say, and so

Lying? I am literally doing that in real life all of the time
When it comes to it: I don't want to get the sack!
I'm not an idiot! The University of Sussex
Got fined for not taking Stock; and she resigned

Before she was shot: she needed security. She
Could come and write this sixth stanza with me
Instead! It might make me less doggerelly, and able
To live: I, too, was once very "shocked and offended".

Nobody Knows What I'm Going to Do

"Such a man can no longer be allowed to exist"
Said the Israeli defence minister
About a supreme leader elsewhere in the Middle East.
Jeez! He is not messing about there! This

Doggerel helps me spare the citizens
Of hospitals, literally people on life support
That are then launched into the sky
By missile launches. “They know not what they do”

Yada yada. Allahu Akbar. Black shoo-in
Jew. I am literally an Ayatollah and a suspense
Mimicker. I’m a head of state concentrating power
In poetry. I am a piece of work—there’s little doubt—

Flirting with flouting international law: Netanyahu
Was such a handsome boy when he was in the IDF.
This discordant droning poem reflects the next world
Snore: I smell it coming in the cave walls, the fireless

Smoke under the dome. It’s how we get in your DM
Zone: hello. Hey! Whose side are you on? O my god
Is your god too: I will literally change religion for you.
But… but they blow up hospitals as well? I don’t know

If you can tell, but we are breaking stuff to build
Hell, on earth. Yeah. Yeah there’s no heaven, love: it’s
Whatever we make up here. Yeah *literally* an Ayatollah.
Fine! Your Grand Rabbi, rhyming: pie. Cannon Fodder.

MOP

I am deploying my Massive Ordnance Penetrator
Bomb (my MOP to my mates). It destroys dates
On the calendar that are marked off
By the enemy as they get closer to forming nuclear

Danger: literally humanity-obliterating weaponry
In the hands of weapons. I may be a bit of a weapon
Myself, but at least I am not close to exploding myself
All over anyone that does not want to drag civilisation

South, back to hell: we drone with precision. We hone
Our diction and daft poetic craft now we have risen
Above shame about where we have been. We clean
And dream of a better world, and then we act on it

Sometimes with missiles launched from hidden ships
In the middle of unknown oceans. I am the President
Of the united stream-of-nonsenseness, by the way.
But at least I am not away with the fairies in a

Foreign land, or only focusing on another person’s
Hair: it is fair to say I do not care too much about what
I poem, moment-to-moment: I am in accordance with
Ordnance, because diplomacy is worth diddly squat

To some maniacal knobs at the negotiating table.
Most of the world still live by medieval fables, I'm
Afraid, people. Best to knock it on the head from the
Sky with my MOP that the guys designed very fine.

Air Force Poem

A full state visit. Gordon Bennett.
I'm off to Balmoral. I am beyond morality.
The Scottish people think very highly of me.
Hopefully I get a bit of time to practice my golf swing.

I'm winging it
On Air Force Poem. I am going
To now be King Charles: Hi, Donny—
Remember when we visited Little Saint James Island?:

I'm libel—I am Les Wexner.
I am rabbit holing Wikipedia. This
Is political mania disguised as diplomacy: look,
Cammy—don't have a go at me: he has that tape

Of us with a bus load of…
Yeah exactly. P Diddy. Literally
Using tax payers money to host the Easter
Bunny that rose again for a second term. Per-

Mutations in a court
Of law do not bother me: I
Literally know the king. I am
Scotland. I am Celtic and Rangers

And Gretna Green: I'm bottom
Of the league and eloping to marry
Me. I am literally barely even a poem. The lines
Of each stanza look like little steps going into a castle.

Pabluming

Feminised men
Pen pushing, pabluming, not saying
Anything but
Rhyming! Wanting

All your time! Draining
Your souls away! With no
Substitutes for their
Hunter-gathering ways.

They are literally
Absolutely nothing. They
Need to express themselves
Through something

Before they implode—
And damage a load of
Women and children.
They will not agree with anything I am saying.

They need to fuck. They need
A substitute for fighting, not
Just talking shite about
Delusional concepts they

Pretend to like. O I don't know: micro
Aggressions displayed in
Saying "hi!"? They
Need to get a life.

The Man Who Fell to Berk

I think I'm in my Thin White Duke phase
Again; I miss the old Kanye
I'm building a new Ashley
At times it can feel fascly

Not really. It's shadowy.
Seriously what the fuck am I saying now.
I'm playing. I'm playing but it touches on something.
OK six lines to redeem this.

I think some of us need to drag our brains
Forward from an old place, and so it's a good job
We don't live in a fascist state

That decrees what we can say.
Cocaine and milk.
OMG I did it in four and you're still moaning!

Man's Best Poet

I need an Espresso: hello! Sabrina Carpenter
On her knees on the news!
O. She had to change it. What
Is it *you're* seeing? I'm sure she's in on it—I'm sure

She enjoyed it. I'm sure they literally asked him
To hold her hair so she can make millions of pounds.
Maybe she likes a pounding? Maybe
She doesn't want a Manchild.

I do not know anything
About Sabrina Carpenter, except
What I have just found on Wikipedia: "No one
Is having sex anymore" one journalist

Stated: she needs sedating!
She needs to stop expressing herself!
She needs to be covered from head to toe
Because I am uncomfortable

With a photo; while man-
Children can be mocked? Fair
Enough—I doubt
They'd knock her socks off though, leave

Her heels on and make her crawl around on the floor.
I don't know what I am even saying anymore: her
Music is alluring, but boring, I assume—because
I am literally fucking whenever I am not poeting.

To Be Near You, To Be Free

I'm at Glastonbury.
I'm not. If I was I'd not be able to type by now.
I'd be kissing a cow: I kissed a cow
I went to school with at Glastonbury once. We went

To the Balkans together afterwards and fell out—
I've mentioned her before. Scroll down. What am I
Going on about now. Don't ask me—I'm on the floor
In my tent after snorting too much ketamine: look

At the state of him. Who would go to Albania with him.
He sounds ridiculous. No wonder the Dalai Lama
Walked off stage after he came out with Patti Smith:
"Ash!" he said. "Ash! Stop

Caning it so much! You'll end up thinking
You're in love!" Because the Night
Brought even more drugs——enough. I wish
I was seeing Rod Stewart. He supports Celtic. I'd fight

A steward (rhymes) and feel ecstatic (like I did
Last time) hearing 'Sailing'
Again: I saw Rod in 2010. He was in
The Faces. Can't relate. Stay with Me:

There is a strong chance I will get even more
Doggerelly. I am starting to think Ashley
Doesn't even exist. The poems aren't even
Consistent: I didn't take a tent: he used "Gabby"'s.

Workshopped

I fuck her like a whore, open
The bedroom door, and say, "After
You, my lady!" We then go downstairs
And watch the news for

Poetry: she

Encourages me, boosting
My self esteem. And stanzas!: “Your
Vocabulary’s a dream!” We
Make a stupendous team. But she
Does not always want to be treated

Whorily—and orally, my
Talents can sometimes be
Dodgy: my
Words fail me—and she
Might not have the capacity

To then support me. So we talk about it!: “What is it
You need?” “For you
To get a grip.” “OK. But can you stop
Calling me a dick?” “No problem.” This
Should happen often. It’s communicating! It’s

Then going back to the dream
Of being shafted into next week—and finding
Synonyms. Of role playing! Of literally
Playing roles in
Poetry: “Don’t call me a whore.” “Naturally.”

Major Concessions

I once was burnt, but I am U-turning
Into love. It is a sign from up above: “Ash!” the
Squirrels on the roof say—“You have learnt your
Lesson now: have this one”: a sensational

Blonde is thrown through the windowpane. Millions
Of babes have come through my windows. She
Doesn’t like me calling her “babe”—which I
Literally never do—or suggesting that millions of

Babes’ve smashed my windows before: insane—doh.
Kier Starmer is providing barnstorming enter-
Tainment for my poems, and I am working on the pain
From her bedroom, without much flow: I

Expended it all a few minutes ago—in minutes:
I am literally a piece of shit. A piece of work.
This is a piece of work coming out of him
When he is at work: they have climbed down, the

Squirrels have: “Poetically? Yes—you were right, Ash:
Politically! Hat-trick! Everyone is sick!” The leader
Of the party in poetry sounds like a tit. I literally
Could not complete a hat-trick right now if I tried:

“Weekly quiz: Who called Donald Trump ‘daddy’?”
I don’t know. Tell me! Distract me. Stop me poeting
Tragically: I rework the rebelling lines so much they
Literally have no impact on me falling in love.

Literally in the Queue to Board the Bus

I’m on the bus. I don’t know what all the fuss is about:
Alas, poor Yorick! What a joke. Going by rhymes! Off
To find the bards lines again, I am: I’m travelling
To The Globe, London. The Son has got his hat on

Literally: the skull on my cap, blacked out. Romeo
And Juliet tonight. Wherefore art thou? Ha! I already
Told you—I’m on the bus! I am literally in Spoons
Before I set off, denying my father and refusing

My name. I am being everyone else instead!—I am not
A Montague. I’m whatever confuses you! I am
Whatever she asks me to be: “O hey, baby—switch
Seats? Yeah that’s fine. No worries, Julie. OK I won’t

Call you “baby” or “Julie”—I’ll sit over there: don’t
Worry.” Romeo must die. Romeo Dunn! 21 seconds
To So Solid Crew this poem! I have absolutely no idea
Where I am going in London when it is 31 degrees: I’ll

Probably pretend I am cool somewhere with the court
Jester on my head: what he writes is literally insane.
He represents death and decay so it doesn’t matter
Anyway. And Hamlet—father bother like Romeo: Billy!

All these psychoanalytic subtexts to your texts! I bet
You knew and didn’t care—a fellow of infinite jest: “ha
Ha ha. Whatcha laughin’ at?” I am listening to Drenge
Really: “I wanna be your friend, so baby let’s pretend.”

The Man in the Iron Crass

Me and Leonardo are feigning in Venice:
I’m at Bezos’ wedding. I’m missing Infringed!
I’m lying: the wedding is this weekend. Are you buying
Everything I am saying? I am The Wolf

Of Poetry. The Man in the Iron Crass. Literally
Departed. Catch Me If You Can.
If you keep buying everything I can expand
My Amazonian empire into space and send multi-

Coloured shoe laces to more and more places
Using robotic drones: they don’t even phone, if you
Aren’t home—they just drop it on the porch. Faulty
Rolexes, literally changing history: they’re ready

To be bought—get listed. But first? Honeymoon!: we
Are jetting to the moon, bitches. Leonardo has peaked
Too soon: he wants to attack the protestors. Goons.
He wants to sign NDAs with their sisters—and why

Wouldn't he: he's living poetically! Mick Jagger
Has just swaggered by. I didn't expect to see Orlando
Bloom. Kim Kardashian! It's even bigger, zoomed in
This close to her: this stanza is not a bonanza. But

The wedding overall is! Because I'm in Venice! I'm
Throwing pennies at the peasants, that make us move
Venues: I do not care. I am literally absolutely
Everywhere, all because you keep buying Tupperware.

Literally, What Is the Met Gala? Not Really

Guess who the new editor-in-chief of Vogue is. Ha—
It's not me! That would be ridiculous: it's like
You have been believing some maniac's poems.
It's like I'm flying back from the Bezos wedding

To get started on the Met Gala invites as well. Might
As well put me on the cover of the first edition
I edit. O 'ere we go—critics: yeah I know
I'm not a model! Wait… I am literally a model. Yeah.

Yeah I am a poetic model—though this isn't going
Very well: Vogue has now been shutdown—can you
Vacate the Metropolitan Museum of Art, too, please.
I think we need to keep him off the news. Why?

Because they're following him around the world
Making him all sorts! And he's hardly touched the
Sports pages yet! Literally: what is the Met
Gala? O hey, Lady Gaga. Yeah. Yeah it's… going well—

But it's hard. Just loads of deadlines—and it's
Difficult seeing through sunglasses all of the time.
The wedding? Ha! Well, Oprah Winfrey kissed Tom
Brady—because it rhymed. O I was fine with it: I

Wrote it! Your meat dress was something else, by
The way. I know that was the VMAs! I am literally lying
On the sofa at home waiting for my dinner to
Materialise when I put it on my own plate—ciao, babe!

Something Ignored, by a Dirtynecked Boy

I literally can't like it in case they all see.
It's great but I cannot do that one simple thing.
Nothing will ever change.

O fucking hell—I'm going to unfollow:

That'll make it all go away. I will not
Be awake at this time then.
Everything will be alright.
I still won't have to express anything.

Everything will be held in. Everything will be terrifying
And that will be safe. Safe and familiar.
I won't feel… *that*: yeah! That…
That feeling. I am blank

Most of the time through my own choice: I am
Always waiting for the right opportunity to be edgy.
I make statements about things I know nothing about.
I pretend to believe and like things that do not interest me

At all. I literally speak to some people
Every day that I feel no connection with whatsoever.
I am not even suicidal yet. He is
A fucking prick. I literally want to like it

But I can't: I feel
Like I am standing on the edge of a cliff
When it is simply pressing a button. I am going to
Choose nothing for myself and blame it on a line break.

<u>Someone Literally Had a Fan in the Park</u>

How can I be homophobic: my ex was "they". Literally.
Now they do not speak me. They do. They would
If they were not blocked: they aren't. The rest
Are—but they were nice: it's why

I stopped speaking to them
And got with a cunt: I got
What I thought I deserved—while they
Encouraged my relationship

With words: blame them! It is literally their fault!
They supported my enjambment
To the hilt. They didn't coerce me into taking
Pills like the cunt did: sometimes, I lie

In parks in London
Meditating, and the past spills out: I need their
Fan before I melt: fan me, "Molly". Make me
Feel amazing. Behave obscenely with me. Peel me

Off the ceiling
Of the sky above this Russell Square park: I am
A poetry lark, flying, crying, regretting
Pushing them away, in my

Temporary meditative state: they
Were a little bit annoying, to be honest. Why do I
Tell you all this? I don't know: the cunts move
Through. Pass away. It has nothing to do with they.

Crow Batters His Cheap Filters

Usher! At the wedding! I used his song "Hey Daddy"
As the soundtrack to one of my poems, and it got him
Invited, I reckon—while Trump is ushering in
Less trade talks with Canada: Bezos

Will need cannulating after the wedding
To ensure he is not suffering from anything
Due to Carney raising taxes: practices—such as
Literally these poems—cause the rich to get verbal

Dyspraxia: "What the FUCK are they doing to my
Stanzas!" they say. It is a good job most of them say
Absolutely nothing about all the money they have
Locked away in secure locations. Matteo Bocelli

Sang at the wedding, reportedly. Bill Gates literally
Flew in using the blood of young children what the
Fuck am I even poeting: Zuckerberg owns Insta—is
He here? Is he now on the yacht with me? "Ashley"—

Brady—"how you doing?" He's so kind. He can see I'm
Losing it. "Teach me about line breaks," he says. "No
Way, Tom!" I say. "They are locked away on an island
Nowhere near Pret at the top of Park Street, that I left

Thirty minutes ago to grace this yacht": I do not
Need to keep looking at the news and poeting every
Moment. But it stops me buying into it: the Premier of
Canada let his passport for these Isles literally Burn.

Millionth Line

The darkest time of my life
Was an achingly beautiful woman wanting to go under
The knife: it's the kind
Of thing to be vigilant of, guys—depicting female

Insecurity in poetry: I literally thought she was Mother
Teresa and Caesar and the maker of me—literally
God—all rolled into one; as her myth dies
More again at 4 am, I am reminded

Less of the rules of poetry again, and of
The fear of speaking the wrong thing
Again in case she trashes me

Again because she cannot face the mirror about

Everything that she is because she was the world: the
Poem sings, but I am cold, because she
Was freezing: we met in 2016—it still shivers
Them: my inner children. We probably shouldn't make

Vile cunts into saints—but it is 4:15, I can't
Sleep, and everyone can be sung
Into memory and literally into nothing then: this
Is the millionth line I have written about her

In my estimation. Her impact was gargantuan.
She is and was a figment of my imagination: do not
Make a statue of her. Do not risk your life on the head
Of a coin, flipping: you will *feel* she's a dick, kids.

I Wrote This in Less Time Than It Took to Write It

Everyone is on a different journey—
I am on a different planet.
I forgot the point of poetry.
I didn't plan it—

I never plan them.
I get the opening lines in my head and go for it: as if
I needed to confirm that.
Something something berserk: it is

The childish dregs that talk: I am
Actually like them. Only it's the opposite
In real life: I
Seem to always need to say this

Like the poems perform bloodletting: they
Balance the wounds. Humours.
They cure diseases.
I am diseaseless and humorous—I am

Numerous poems
Of unequal measure. Something something pleasure—
Rhyme. I am like this
All of the time

In poetry. You literally get
The worst of me. I am hardly even writing it—I am
Definitely not fighting it: I am venipuncturing on
Venus. I am actually doing this. It is painfully real.

The Physical Literally of M&S Poetry

I'm at the Saatchi: this is not
Just woetry. This is M&S Poetry.

I am not paying £20 to get into the *Flowers* exhibition.
I'm not kidding—I'm Santandering

Around London: Sloane Square
Station is over there. Holbein Place.
He painted Henry VIII's face. Fuck it:
I'm cycling through the *Flowers*—it's been

Hours since I poeted anything serious: Charles is in
Hysterics watching. Phew! He's putting me in formal-
Dehyde solution, though: 'The Physical Impossibility of
Being a Poet

In the Mind of Someone Dead'—in the hands
Of a mad typer. The deranged
Gallery attendees are hyper, arting on, obvz: "He's
God!" Yada yada. I'm allowed an

Unlimited amount of these
Trips within 24 hours, if
They are less than 60 minutes: I leave
The daffodils and get a new bike—the sweat

Slides off me like lines
In a final stanza: wife after wife on standby: the King's
Great Matter. Cathy banished in a tower. Then Boleyn
Fucked her own brother: O bother. Woe. Nigella—go.

Leicester Square

A different man
Came out of the cubicle
And splashed his hands
Under the tab, while I
Scrubbed mine, and I felt
Spectacular,
Cleaning correctly.
I'm in The Moon

Under Water. I've just been in the
National Gallery. One day I'll
Be in the portrait variety
Around the corner
Without any Spoons. My children will have
Silver spoons. They'll be
First class to the moon. It's
Happening soon O it's

Happening again now: I'm on the moon.
I was under water but I stopped doggy
Paddling and I floated to the top. I was well tough.
Right 'ard, I was. This means I was extremely
Wrong. Can I still sometimes get it wrong? Yeah sometimes—I don't

Wash my hands every time: I have
Trash in my phone I still hover over in agony: I can still
Sound pigheaded: my head's back in a crater already: "U up?"

Treating Myself

I go to therapy and masturbate into my own mouth
And have a baby out of my mouth and then fuck it
Up my arse and then shit it out and
Eat it. I'm the therapist's favourite—I know it.

I leave with a glow and go
I don't know: my feet take me. They walk on their own.
I stay away from everything. My terror is loads
More than it used to be and that's the prize: therapy

Has awarded me my own competition which awards
Me me. I can then give others nothing because they're fucked. I fell over and broke my arm
In sixteen places and we all agreed it was meant to be. I removed all of my clothes at work
and they didn't understand. Weirdly, I am also
Now a brand.

It's mad knowing how everyone else does everything and not having to finish the poems.

HawkEye

I nearly forgot: I'm at Wimbledon!
I'm on the M4 leaving London: I am not
With Sinner. Some comment about sinning. It's
Impossible not to sin in the summer

When no one's wearing anything: Tool
Station is one of the things I am passing. A crash.
Scaffolding. I need scaffolding around my flat
Poetry to hold it up—it holds

Me down and stops me floating off
Into the sky: it literally makes me cry
With laughter—before a stunner appears, Centre
Court of the bus: electronic calling?! You cannot

Be serious! I didn't even look. BBC Sport absolutely
Loves Raducanu changing coaches every minute:
She'll not win another tournament—Alcaraz
Won't care: he'll serve for their relationship: I read it

On Reddit. I didn't: we are rallying out
The traffic. The smooth lanes feel fantastic. I know
Little about tennis: Andy Murray is British, unless
He loses? I suppose I know what it feels like to travel

At 150 mph through the air off a racket: "Ace! Ash!
Not so fast—how did you get a ticket?" I flew in

Poetic. But let's hope my backhand is better than this
By the next match: hard shoulder. Another crash.

The Chrysanthemum and the Sword

I told the internet intimate details about a prostate massage I had.
It was excellent. It worked like a charm. People
I didn't want to be acquainted with anymore
Stopped following me and whoever apparently had the prostate massage

Floated away and I was free to superstring whoever was next
Of him. What do I mean? I've no idea. We've no idea. It felt
Like the right thing to do. What else is there in life? This feels
Right, right now. If it is then released then

That would have felt like the right thing to do too. Why? Dunno. After
The fact, I worked out the prostate piece got rid of some of those
Losers from my life though. Delightful. This
Feels like practice, I reckon. I changed my number

Based on feeling too. That has just come to me as a way
To round off this poem for reasons I am not fully exposed to yet, which is extremely
adequate reasoning.

*

Lucky
For you that you've

Never been anything
Uncomfortable or weird or whatever. Perverted or
Wrong. No but I want to say this: how
Much of you is you—what am I doing?

I do not want to sound like this—am I
Going to look alarmingly wrong? What goes together and what doesn't
Go together? I once
Made 600 lunches, the night

Before a trip, and I randomly chose
One to take with me the next day. Of course I
Didn't do this. Why 600? What the fuck are you going on about now?
Hardly a tick of shame left: imagine it.

The Mirror & the Light

She has got me around her little finger.
Good job she's not a minger.
Good job I have sung along
With every single one of these stanzas

In the whole wide universe in a past life. Good job
This poetic caricature

Is a wanker: how would I even handle her
Otherwise? I mean, she is not to be handled: good job

I said that here and
Not really. Good job I leave nearly everything
Behind in poetry. If I didn't I might be everything
Outside, the mirror

And the light—that reflects and shines within
These lines—being out in the world instead. By the
Way: being historical fiction is a crime against
Poetry—but she isn't: she herself is the mirror

And the light, as I was beheaded in another
Poem. Look it only relates to the rest of life if
You want it to. And if I want another wife I grant my
Self one as I am now the pope too.

Weird One

The pain passes through
And leaves this for you, only

I haven't worked out
What it is yet (I still

Cannot do the nature stuff: I'm sure you can sit
Quietly in some meadow

Actually it's irrelevant what it looks like around you at the time, as you'll be concentrating
On not concentrating, sort of thing, and the fact your

Arm is your arm and that it's been there the whole time: weird one
Isn't it).

A Lot to Reflect On

I abstain. No—don't count
On my vote: I'm going. I'm leaving.
I didn't sign up for this: these
Ministers are taking the piss: benefits

Being slashed? Gash. I'm glad it's all anonymous.
I'm in the House of Commons. Come on—
I am literally not: I'm Angela Rayner—
I'm on Lorraine. Lorraine gets younger and younger

Every time I see her on the cover of a magazine
When I am queuing in Tesco: if
Only we all got younger. We wouldn't need
To cover so much bad health then. OK they're

Counting the votes now… Passed! They got it through!

Will they increase borrowing or make you
Pay through the nose in taxes? The fact is, I didn't
Sign up to be a political poet. "If you can call

This that!"—exactly! I'm inconsistent: I'm David
Lammy. Foreign Secretary. LBC. I said I was leaving—
Yes. Erm. Ermmmmm. I just need
To claim my expenses. Yes it is expensive—to my

Literary career—to waste my lines like this,
Lorraine. O but this is Chanel. Yes it was a gift
From the Emir of Bahrain: he changed his name
To King. He's four wives. Benefits! He literally cheats.

It's a Unix System, I Know This

I do not even believe what I say—I don't
Poet what I believe: every-
Poem is insane. Have you spoken to
Poems lately? They're incoherent: Jurassic

Age. Jurassic lark: "Look, Ash," the speaker
Says, "Don't start. Don't become the page." The state
Is literally funding me: there—you've got me: I am
Poetry espionage. A spy bard. I rhyme hard

To find your hard drive's dark arts: "What
Poems have you got in there, Ash?" O God—stashed
Away is my plan to literally obliterate
Rape and poverty. But first we have to act less

Performatively: social cults of personality! Local
Celebs of vainglory! "Saviours of humanity", literally
Stomping around like dinosaurs worshipping absurd
Stanzas detached from reality, solipsistically: it's

Every poem, I reckon. Even me. Even him—stuck
In shame or "sin". What the literal actual fuck
Am I even saying: I am inside a poem terror-
Dactyling—which ain't even poems: they're

Flying reptiles. And extinct: the poet doesn't exist.
I'm nothing. The entire ancient past has gone up
In poems. Eight-ish "poems" in a poem: self-
Referential annihilation. Stop being. Jeff Goldblum.

Bean-Shaped Organ

I am losing my mind. I'm losing my job.
I'm quitting all my activities. She'll
Never get rid of me. I'm giving her too many
Of my kidneys at this rate. We have been dating

For two weeks and at this rate I'll be
Repeating what I said in the first stanza: she is from
Romania. It is literally true and it rhymes
Slightly. I am having an amazing time but it impacts

My lines in ways that I do not make up in real poetry:
I make it up in real poetry so it does not ruin my life—I
Am not sure if that logic is right but it is only life.
I have not spoken to anyone in weeks or paid my rent.

I am spent because I am selling all I own and buying
Her a new phone and I'm guessing a throne: you
Know why, by now. O come on—don't act all shocked:
You know what I'm like. You knew it from the start—

I told you: I'm losing it! Look—I quit. I just can't do it
Poetically anymore: work. Well I need to make it work
With the woman who is wearing my workout shirt
And making me go berserk: she is literally downstairs

Cooking. I am watching from the ceiling: I have a
Poem, you know?—not a feeling—about
Anything I would tell you. Because you aren't
Her, dur—reader: they literally regulate blood.

"Can You Send Me That?"

I cannot stand up in her shower: I am literally
On the ceiling. I am too long. My poems
Are not long enough: we have been together
Hours—I clean away the older stanzas with her

Gel and then I have a shower at her house—I wonder
How she feels right now: I am reading this, out loud,
Right now: the shower of this is turned on by me
Literally reading it. Not this time, no: only the first time I

Read it loud out to her and made her reaction: she hit
The roof—she must have before I'd wrote it: our
Lives have already been written: it's odd—because
When it gets so close *to me*, I stop. Then I start again

Into another stanza and make things go faster draft-
Ing daft in the bath for this part hoping she comes
Down off the roof, laughing: poof! I'm gone again! I
Didn't want to poem as the real Ashley Dunn! Literally.

I use the soap and cleanse my face, washing away the
Drafts I have not wanted to share: my head
Touches the light and it frightens me: I cannot stand
Myself and I ask for some help—I ask for some love—

And I make something up in a poem, and I read it out

To the girl climbing in the window, out of the sky,
Because she was up there outside: OK—right. I dry my
Skin and count less hours and let you read me.

Poor Man!

I'm gone. I'm not. I'm Orgon.
I am. Tartuffe has got me in a spin: he's won
My daughter, but wants my wife—I'm giving
Too much away. I am literally in a play.

I am playing the part of Orgon in *Tartuffe*
With Clifton Amateur Dramatic Society
(CADS) at The Clifton Club
At the end of July (and some

Of August). There are just
Four performances. Buy tickets—witness
Me literally losing my mind
As a character, in a farcical

Drama. When Molière wrote it he
Got in a bit of bother. Now he is one of the most
Famous voices in French literature: the "language
Of Molière", they say! Can't relate. (Come to the play.)

Marched Them Down Again

I'm in New York.
I'm in the Duke of York.
I am literally brushing my teeth—I am
Writing it up neatly now. I am ten thousand men:

When I am up I am fucked.
If all of us are down I am literally fucked:
Yesterday I went to Clevedon
Marine Lake, and I was heavy petting

By the water and the fish swam to the top, saying,
"Ash! Ash! You're mad!" It was mad. No one looked.
When I was in New York I had my little finger
In and out of a little bag a lot. It is going in and out

Of one now in the Duke of York: my teeth
Are numb. I am brushing them from the back of
My throat with laundry detergent: I'm Arieling.
Novacaine is a pain when you are swimming

In ten thousand places at once
In a poem, especially when you only have lines
One and two from when you were brushing
Nothing. If I went to Saint Werburghs now I

Wouldn't. I'd end up needing a numbing agent:
When I am down I am swimmingly pretending—I am
Pretending in the real poem: I'm at the top of the hill—
The Downs. The fish I heavily petted did not frown.

To a Workshop Facilitator

I'm concerned you've gone through your whole career
Without realising some of this stuff is actually about
Demonstrating the construction of that career, only it also isn't
About that too, if you get what I mean: the construction
Of *your* career, that is. O yes: definitely your career—because that's just an example

Of it itself too, only in some minor way. Of course I understand
That you might not get that and that there's

Nothing to get about that too yes yes it is
In fact: yes I'm sure it's obvious. But I got it as gift—
The drum. The empty drum. You relate? So I thought I'd
Come and use it: waste not want not.

I'm an Alien

Steady on, Sting! It's only your second workshop!
The highway is suddenly
Unapologetically covered in trash
Both sides, the rills—no: freshets
Dull. Easy to wade through. Sting's

Down quickly from his man in the mirror phase—
Pulls over like he's walking up to the crease: gets out
For a duck. He's thoughtful! Still loves inflatables.
Who's bowling? Full toss and the other attendees
Are stumped or embarrassed. The driver

Checks the rule book as the road stretches out beneath the sea; praying
Rabbits splash about on lily-
White pads that are clearly about to be saturated
By the trash they're lobbing about: I expected more
From the overs, miss—some raw

Fumbles in the outfield not just recycled
Packaging from all this lean meat. Or more inflatables!
I know it's hot: that's what I'm saying! I don't trust
The bodies it brings up. Now Sting's doing a
Moonwalk and I can't even get a single with these covers on.

The Treachery of Poetry

Gödel. Escher. Bach.
The words are hiding beneath burps.
This line needs to be like this so the first two lines seem less berserk?
I know—steadying. It is weird how it works.

The voice is at the end
Of an eternal, golden braid: you don't
Know how it is made. Too right do you want to own it!
I don't even know what I am saying, literally—it

Is sent to me
From deep within a cave. What a pain! Feel
Beneath all the insanity and pain and the seemingly
Inane poetry will make sense: it is

Nothing to do with me: I am hearing
Echoed symphonies. I am drawing on nonsense stair-
Cases. I am literally incompleteness—I'm
Uncooperative cognitive: I am a frog

In the throat by the sounds
Of it, I bet: I am twisting around your tongue—ouroboros. Everybody
Is literally nothing but
Phoney stanzas, lopping back through

In strange… loops? Fuck: a paradoxical
Book has inspired some toxical
Content for them. "Toxical" is archaic—you
Literally would not say it. Gödel. Escher. Bach.

<u>What Is The French For Ashley?</u>

While I was literally in Alicante
I watched Spain score five goals against Mbappe
And company, as they made it to the final
Of the Nations League, though they did concede

Four themselves: two more'd've knocked them out.
Something else I am going to make up
Went down: I found
A way around the confusion of what to write

Right now, by spending the equivalent of £92,000
On cured meat (really, I probably spent
Around £29 on cured meat during the whole
Trip). I must admit, I nearly shit

A brick when I was eating my chorizo stick: Kolo
Muani scored in the 93rd minute, and the locals
Thought I was French, I think: Oh là là! Va va voom!
Maximilien Robespierre with his head removed

Again! But I didn't care
Really: I wasn't even eating any meat
By then: I'd finished my dinner, before
I'd gone to the bar to watch the telly, with my

Full belly. And the locals were nice. This is quite
Literally one of the actual nights I had in Alicante.
On the other four I had honteux orgies: even I
Considered this a pointless poem until now!

Unpredictability Doctrine

"He's literally sitting on Air Force One
Laughing at you": Trump's
Director of comms is literally
Me—and talking about me: he is being

Both. The poem is neither. It's an Unpredictability
Doctrine! Literally—what the fuck is he doing: Dicky
Nixon, apparently. Though I'm far above the trees
In a drone, I assume—whilst reading a BBC article

In costume: Putin's on the phone being mean—
O well: I'm leaving the international scene—I am
"A process built largely on impulse", the
Senior correspondent writing this piece

Believes: this is Madman Poetry, and it achieves
An increase in spending on the military—up to 5%
Of GDP in allied countries: what a dream; the NATO
Chief was giddy. I literally don't have a Penny, only

A plane: a plain piece of paper—"a
Combination of conscious choice and … very real
Character traits … working, on some
At least." But not many: it's a good job I'm president

Of nothing. It's a good job he's overseas, taking back
Everything: technology; security. Then if the Russians
Get frisky? The French could enter the frosty Moscow
Snow and be blown away badly: 1812; Tchaikovsky.

He Literally Cried

Me and Barrett and Buñuel
Are driving to Andalusia
From Alicante: I overtake
To dissociate. We are listening to *The Dark Side of the Moon*, the only
Side because I have a grip
Of the steering wheel: "Hold
The steering wheel"—it knows me. Barrett

Cannot take it: "They didn't understand me!"—throws
Itself from the vehicle
Onto the sand: Syd sunk. Me and
El Bunny (close friends only) continue to
Almeria, with plans
To watch the final of a pony

League. The trophy literally

Weighs the same as the Champions League. The director knows I am going—
I'm gone. It's
Half time and it's 2-1. It was me
That jumped from the vehicle, not mummy's boy.
Ronaldo
You know what? I don't even think he will actually be bovved
If they lose. Some boos

From England fans against Andorra. Appalling
Performance. Barrett moved back in with his mother
And was *not* gone, in fact, I suspect—just bored.
Saw it all coming.
I am driving at 150km an hour and the dash is screaming, "Ash!
Consider
Taking a break! Have a coffee, Ash!" What

Will stop me: the second
Half—Spain kicking us off. Forcibly removed from my own Notes app! Absolute
Trash from pain. Arnold Layne. Lamine
Yamal is going to do something insane (doesn't)—I
Can feel it, but not relate. The chien
In the boot just howled and literally ate its own head. Dali: similar trouble. Syd
Struggled poetically because he wasn't in the driver's seat.

Sacrebleu!

I am on another one: I'm
Macron: Sacrebleu! Windsor Castle! Cammy
The Queen is… well… ravishing! I've met
Her before, dur—the poet's

Struggling: my teacher
Slaps me if I give her any hassle—can we
Do some math on the plane over, miss? King
Charles is going to say—vaguely—

That a few things are amiss. Only he cannot say what.
We aren't allowed to say what. It's like being in class
With this lot! With absolutely everyone! Bring back
The guillotine. Miss. Wife! Can I visit the cockpit? I'm

Sorry: sit me on the wing. I think it's just the faux
Lighting. Though I hear her step son likes a good
Pegging. My constituents don't like working: they
Strike like the wife when I do not get the poems right.

"Well, Then You Can Swallow It, and It'll All Dissolve"

I am getting a girlfriend:
It's working perfectly. I'm changing reality.
I am literally god.

O no. O god. Not again.

She's gone. I made her
A character and me god
Again and she's gone: I am now worshipping
At my own cross, again: I am cross holding my own

Cross—it's in a vice. Calling it a
"Cross" is a terrible device and senseless: it's not
What you think. It literally is. I could have been
In the pink but I am sunk

Into everything because I am god: I am in
The plant pot: O god—she thought plants
Have souls: I am a massive cock. If I can use
"Literally"

Coherently for once, it is to admit that: I am a massive
Cock, poetically: she is going to have my babies, the
Real one of her is.
This is only a poem:

I make stuff up so I can make where I am going
In the real poem. The real poem
Doesn't know where it is going
Until I am here. Above the screen, she appears.

Another Win(doh): Probably Not the Final One

O yes it is.
O no it's not.
I'm flying back without flow. I'm not.
I'm on the sofa. I've just watched Tom Cruise

Fly a plane
Instead and climb out of it
Into another one but I am not cruising. Doh.
I need his dianetics. I need

To clean my brain. I am cleaning it.
It doesn't sound like it, does it, because
It sounds… you guessed it: insane.
"O yes it is"

Rhymes alright with
"Dianetics". I feign
To plane and sound insane: it's tame
Already, isn't it. O yes it's not. I said

I'm without flow doh. Doughless. Comes
A point where we must pilot
Ourselves though: Orpheus
Is where I watched the latest

Mission. God I'm a liar—it's not: that cinema
Is now called "Scott". But it was—once—
Mythical. "Scott"
Ties in nicely with a

Poem I've got: I'll post it
Later. Within years. It's childish, but
It'll make me feel better.
This is the doggerelist

Doggerel, ever. It is nearly
Impossible. O no is yes. He literally
Hid his plane
Beneath another

Plane, in the air. It was ridiculous. Spectacular.
Holding on to the wing. All of this sounds completely
Unconnected and
Cringe. You're guessing I'm Tom Cruise. O no we are.

Forced Diuresis

Putin needs putting in his place
In a poem. It is snowing.
It is always snowing and it is always going
Absolutely nowhere: it melts

And goes back up into the sky. He met his sly bride
When she was a teen. What a dream
To have a billion pound compound
On the Black Sea. They are both into gymnastics.

He can get really nasty and then deny it—whereas she
Revolutionised the discipline with her tricks: a back
Split pivot! The Kabaeva! "Get her
Over here!" he said. "I am, after all,

The President of Russia." She'll be no push-
Over. Report on her and he'll shut down your paper!
He literally does not have a compound
Or a somersaulting wife: I'm sorry, Vlad—you are

The Great Russian Bear. My Dad! (I value my life.)
He has no time for America swinging its might
Around everywhere, droning in the sky—while he
Spies online and rigs my poems: even Trump

Doesn't know what he's doing! O and he's poisoned
Me with snow now: I'm dead. Long live the clouds in
The West. Left is right. Like much of history, we
Can make up whatever we type: "imir" means "play"...

Or “cheat”! The poem was to be six stanzas, only
It shall now be eight. The fate of the human race
Is in trying to rhyme chaos: yeah it is mostly bathos—
So what? It is all the grizzly’s currently got: I am not

Sure what else to put. I feel at the mercy of
Deranged cunts. It is why I do not mind sounding like
A dunce: at some point it started snowing—and now
There’s no fun. I’m playing no one. I am not his Son.

Auto-Write

This paper-thin, performance art
Poetry stores all of me,
Leaving him free
To walk the streets

Like it’s a dream that only rhymes
At times, lines
Masquerading as personality
Shoddily squeezed into bogus western

Natural kinds, the broken like
To find to feel good
Temporarily. Though they could

See the stage in the snow instead
That’s there to bear their
Screenplayed history for them.

Where Is My Peach?

I am surviving on coffee and peaches: I’m catching
Modernity it’s already gotten
Away from me—look: above—you know what’s
Coming: I’m postmodern—I’m staring

At the kitchen: nothing. Empty.
Empty fridge. An empty banana skin. Empty
Tray empty shelves that look a bit broken. Eliot’s
Strenuous effort, and for what? For me? I’m closing

Out a century’s attempts
At elevation, returning to
Crustaceans. Figuratively! I am
Literally staring at a fish

Being prepared on the marble: I need
Something that is marble. I need a good
Meal as well, before I lose… something: I cannot
Think what—let me make myself

A coffee: dare I yeah I do—peaches

Too: that'll see me through. It always has. But maybe
I should try without them for a while? Ridic-
Ulous, he is: "Ash": the things that come out, when we

Auto-write: it is a psychic ability—you hardly even need
A recipe, let alone ingredients: I was swimming
In the Caribbean, and a barnacle
Was cooking its own exoskeleton.

Saviours of Humanity

Hey! Just to remind you again, that I am aware
I stand beside myself. And I have not the tools

Today, so I'll turn it into something kind: here is where an indirect
Metaphor would be, referring to you

As dead, or similar. I'm assuming you don't
Understand? Because I wrote it so you don't

Understand, that is: there you go.
And in my grief!

On Tap

Hosepipe ban: close
The tap. Look just turn that tap off—stop
The poetic tap. But I can't!
It is spraying all over the lawn, up and over the

Fence into the neighbour's stanza: what
Can I do. It's hot! I've gotta stay cool: I literally
Need waterboarding. Can't we confiscate his
Keys to the water supply O no we

Can't do that: he's had them
Since he was twatted as a child: it made
The hose grow—it made
The Pinocchio nose of nonsense prose

Load into the other neighbour's yard now too. "It's
Literally coming out of that hole
And straight into a drain," was said on the news: you
Knew the drain was stealing it from the news! It is

Ridiculous to impose restrictions on the
Interpretations available to those that are
Confused: "It just got worse and worse and every
Time any traffic came through, water

Just splashed down the overflow"—some man
In Skipton, knows. I am literally pissing into the wind-
Up, spraying pages down the street: I am blaming

The heat and the fact that I cannot use my hose.

Get In the Bin

They've binned her off! Bin
Collection workers of Brum: Unite! Only
Not with Rayner: she's
No longer a member.

The rubbish piles up, reams
Of it. Stacks of crap
Stanzas, readers
Going on strike, hiking

Themselves to the tip instead. The rats
Are still getting fed, at least, the stench
Rising like yeast: I can hear
You creasing and clenching

Your teeth. The Brummies feared
For the bats of the city
Last week, what with Ozzy
Screeching on stage: he should make it his last

Page. Labour should get with the programme
And sing the same hymn sheet as their voters.
They do not give a fuck about dockers, etc. The
Working classes are regarded as rats, by most

Readers of poetry. "Has he lost his mind? Can
He see or is he blind?": Iron Man. Ash.
Starmer! I am going to bite your fucking head off
In a poem. The bins will still be out when it is snowing.

An Entire Block of Cheddar

I am fond of a trauma bond: it's
Profound. And I've found
Another that isn't safe (but tastes
Great)—though I'm the only

One of us that's on the ground
Enough to sound
The alarm between us: I don't.
I write a poem instead. Good

Job she literally doesn't exist. Good job
I can feel them from way off
Down the street now: I cross, and toss
That self off the nearest bridge

A little bit more—"Poor me!" always
Walking towards me, making me

Horny, involuntarily. They never
Seem to know what's going

On though: I always
Have to ghost them to save us both
From literally wanting to jump off a bridge.
The pain of it used to make me run to the fridge

To binge. Cringe. Now I just
Singe it off here: you are
A gorge, reader—and she isn't here
Like I said earlier, because I am wiser

And better at ignoring the twinge
Of excitement, offered
By such psychic incitement
To life derailment: I prefer

Ignorance—though it seems
To be every other pedestrian
Some days. But that's OK: I only
Wanted eight stanzas today anyway.

Gonna Throw It Back to You

At least I'm not in Oasis: at least
I'm not Bonehead. At least I am bone idle
With views on absolutely
Nothing instead, apart from saying how much I am not

Seeing Oasis. Yada yada the president's hair. OK I am
Bonehead and I am now
Returning
To Oasis: the new

Person in my office likes them: I should too.
Yada yada I'm blue—he's orange. This new
Employee: they've a red cap! But not like that. But
I'm open to everything, you know—if required?

OK sure not that—I just say it edgily sometimes. Ha!
"Is it worth the aggrava-": probably not
With me, no: I am nauseating. Wonderwall? Pfft.
I literally know the words to every B-side.

Lazy Piece

She couldn't stop putting me down: I left
The house and that spouse
And became someone else
So we both did not become another statistic: I

Changed my digits. She could do

Whatever she wanted—I would still
Sing to her over and over: she didn't
Care. She spread rumour. Shamed me. Funny now

In all honesty. I went through a phase of
Wanting to kill her. Literally. Not actually. When she'd
Bump into me in the street, she would laugh
About the latest guy she was seeing. Weird. I literally

Couldn't read or work when we were
Speaking to each other again: fuck the
Poetry's order—watch ~~who~~ what you're doing, men.

More Mucus

I found my voice. It is exquisite
And it's not. Sometimes it is literally snot:
I blow my nose into the paper
And write with the slime

And rhyme and send it off to Faber and Faber
Literally because it rhymed. I am sick
Of "literally" too. At least a little bit.
At least I am not as sick of it as the fit

It makes you want to throw though—which might
Make the snot flow though: I don't know
What you want me to do: you are literally holding
The paper under your own nose—a part

Of you must know you need to read it: the needy
Part being wrestled by the future, I reckon. "Needing"
To tie up "need it" and "needy" and "holding". No—
I am not bold: I have reckoned

With myself—I am now beckoning you off your
Shelf with bogey poetry: above par. Hairbrained also
Because of what I said boldly in the last stanza. Stare
Long enough straight ahead and you will beg

Yourself to both stay and go. Some gunk'll
Flow from your nose though if you are lucky too: sounds
Delusional, doesn't it? Literally sick of it: you're snot
Yourself. You will now sneeze before the day is out.

Literally Lazy and Inconsistent

I could not tell anyone
About being splattered or my
Auntie/Uncle, so now I tell everyone
Everything. Can you relate? But you weren't

Splattered? Right. OK.

I am not in the right frame
Of mind to be literally being me
Right now, but I will try anyway—poeticising

Myself. It is why it'll sound lazy.
But that doesn't matter because at least
I am trying myself, rather than reading this
And sighing. Look at how the stanzas develop

Like steps—little
Steps forward each
Time. It is sublime like I
Tell myself I am. I shoot for the

Hughes and land
As your local deranged poet, only I
Know it—unlike him. And I am literally like
This—in poems. He isn't actually like his poems:

We all know it. O no one
In particular. Literally. Two lines
To finish me off this time again, as I seem
To like six stanzas. Practice often. Don't tell anyone.

Doggerel Inside a Sonnet

We'd felt magnetic
She'd started thinking in couplets
I'd only lasted a minute
I said her name over and over
It was pathetic
But we had been poetic!
I came in her mouth
After that, the poetry went south
As it always must. I felt like dust
What a palaver
I wanted to migrate to Java
The poetry left with her
She didn't have to consider whether to keep it or not
It wasn't mine either

Viva Vice

I can't decide if the captions are tissues or tears? I suppose
It's more of a comment—I'm aware we can't do that anymore, without our
Shameful youth intruding: I, too,
Am a lioness.

Look I'm just trying stuff out—it's brave
Of me, not needing to explain! Look let me explain: there's a panel
Of internal
And external examiners, and an independent chair—I

Please them and sleep better
For three hours. O that? That's Latin, that is—
Lat. In. Like how you pronounce "latte"
Like "hat-ay". And it means "living voice", OK? I'm not too

Sure on the etymology beyond that, obviously: I'm still playing.
BecauseIwouldnevereververtakeaspacethatisrightfullyyoursnoweitheryousee.

Probably a Scientology Lecture Then

My life
Here has become a fantasy, only I know
It feeds back emotionally
And spiritually only I am outwardly
Silent with it. It isn't on my face
Or impacting on my relationships. It's entertainment.
It's quietly didactic but that's all I'm saying.
I don't know what I'm saying—
I don't know what he's saying. I'm out
The way watching these paving
Slabs cause mayhem (in my head): I glide along
Plainly like an environmentally-friendly
Scooter. I type the humour indifferently. It isn't
Funny though and it isn't me—but it will be

Feeding back a bit
Cyclically into the universe: nothing
Happens in a vacuum. I consume
And regurgitate and psychically
Ruin the planet, despite
What his scooter does. I ignore the fuss. I do justice
Somehow—I must. I dialectic as I cruise.
I mop up too: those unamused
And/or confused become more attuned: the planet
Improves, actually. I'll probably explode but that'll only
Be my body: the bodies of berk
Will remain. God I'm glad the speakers are always
Insane. God I'm glad I'm inane and plain aside from these stains. God I'm glad I'm brave enough to see the warmup once he reads it back and to still stick with that.

More Short Trips From Ick-aca

Fuck sake—it's getting to the point where I won't be able to use
Any of my old poems: I wanted to cut
All my old muses'

Heads off, because neither of us ever knew
Where we were going, and it was easier
For me to lambast them for being like that
In poetry, than to acknowledge

Myself, more so
Then I already have, believe it or not: I'm fucked; I'm shot

To pieces yada yada. Something funny here.
She's the whole sky and I'm the only guy
Not just for her but for the whole wide universe—as we all

Well know. The iterations
Are loco but *she*

Smelt of cocoa butter. It was heavenly. She was an angel

And then it was another stanza and she was lard:
She knew *exactly* what she was playing at—

But… why wouldn't she? She…

Existed separately from me? But I've got all these great
Fucking poems that might

Have to go in the bin now.

Chance, That

You are literally watching a boy that disappeared,
I think, purposely. He wrote "bot" at first! It is berserk.
I disappeared kipping in the local football ground
Once I'd come down from the amphetamine
At thirteen. I was twelve but liked the rhyme. "Twelve"
And "ground" though! Eleven, about to enter heaven.
Ten, nine, eigh- Takeoff! They didn't even count
Down they just scored: off I floated! I was not even
Seven, even. I was actually younger. How did I finish
My dinner after that? I can't remember! Mad. Two, on-

Off! He died and I am now sublime. I am going
To delete all these when it feels like the right time.
There's nothing else for it. I'm burning off pieces.
You're looking at pieces of Ash! It's a sonnet
And then it is not. Forget about it! It's only poetic
Structure. It changes all the time. Just write
Some other lines: "Ashley is literally off his face
As he rounds the goalkeeper and bundles the
Poem into an open net: the empty stadium
Roars! He flies up on to the roof of the stand

As he lies in bed watching the highlights." Life
Is forward momentum, *plus* a deranged tail end, *if*
You think about it: you may be high with your blue-
Prints, knocking down old arenas (you'll think) as you
Build a new one with them: "I literally need to keep
These bricks. Because look what they did to me: Ref!
VAR! It was offside! There was definitely a foul
In the build up: look at him protesting on the touch-
Line!" Terrible. O well. Only a poem, isn't it! I am
No doubt demolishing this one too, and creating…

You guessed it—a new stanza—of what isn't anymore
As well: these will now be slow stanzas of play, and it
Doesn't matter. At least to you! It does not matter
To you, Ash, because you have gone. That's right—
We got there: you aren't in the freezing terraces
No more. We're in the arena! We are literally in space
Or bed. I keep looking back up at the screen, at what
You've said: not your best form, this—but I ain't gena
Remember it. I changed position! Switched drugs! Do
Something at least I mean bloody hell—these VAR

Consultations: try, "Ref! Yeah I'm just going to give
Some other kit a go, while you have a think—golf, say.
Or literally being an astronaut. Literally making things
Up and having an actual fire in bed, ref, in this
Nicked coat I am commentating in, in a football stand
From a cot," instead. I'm not joking! Listen—I am not
Taking the piss out of you, Ash—but you best get up:
Better tell yourself every second you remember, that
Someone has had it harder. I'm not comparing! I didn't
Want to be a referee of poetry: fuck rhythm, you loser.

Haha another stanza only to literally set it on fire
When it went completely mindless ages ago: before
10, I reckon! But dunno: I can't count from up in the
Gods. But I am not laughing at you, if you are
In bed. Though if you can read this you can obviously
Read, so at least you are not literally eating your own
Faeces like some people do, or are made to. But you
Do you, you berserk space cadet, you: burn them off.
Forget about them! They are in you, in space, in bed,
Waiting to be dead. They dunt even wana be a poet!

<u>Ages Ago</u>

I'm still self-soothing. It
Is taking a while to smooth out. I've done it loudly.
O well. What are you going on about now?
Dunno. Who cares. Everything appears

Weird to someone: I'm writing a song
That I know is exquisitely
Beneficial for me—but someone will find it shit,
And there is nothing I can do about it. This

Is the song. It only appears wrong because you
Probably need to soothe a bit as well. I'm doing
Well, thanks. Doing OK. That is what we say. It would be
Insane for me to say that and not write trash-

Sounding pieces like this though: I would still be in a
Ditch if I did that! And I'm not a foolish lout.

I'm not the speaker! Bloody hell: I'm coming
Down into myself. £1000. I wonder if he shared that yet.

That one is absolutely mad. Magic. I'm glad I didn't write that one.
O you'll find out. It is something doing the rounds. That
Sounded lazy but it's fortuitously ambiguous. Inconspicuous—
I would like to go with this. But the speaker likes to cause a fuss: terrible!

Speaking of Michelangelo!

She is reading my T.S. Eliot—I wrote
About it in another poem
That's more romantic: you don't
Get that one. She gets it. You get the

Dick. Wait… Doesn't matter. Let us go then, you and I,
When the speaker is spread out across the sky
Like a poet cutting themselves open on a table
To create boundless fictions

Half-deserted: I can't
Remember where we started: she is reading my-
O—we met
Over in that there village: Clifton

With the bridge—I was about to jump
Into a real poem then!: she flew in
Like an angel and started making me
A better man: I was stumped. I wasn't—

I was just down in the dumps: I was thumbing
My nose at everyone. I am literally fudging
Poems together pretending I am anyone else
But me. "You know, you're a little bit Waste

Landy!" she didn't expound. "I am more 'Hysteria' or
'La Figlia Che Piange'," I… might say—only that would
Be too close to me: "Ash! Calm down!" Till human voi-
Vices yada yada drown. O! and she's still not frowned.

Like a Record

I mean, it's my mental health.
I mean it is just what I am like.
I mean, it's how you are reading it.
I mean, it is something I ate—

It is something I had to put in my mouth:
I can't stop. And why should I?
I mean, I don't even know this guy.
Too right do I know where he lives! Too right

Do thousands of wrong

Poems a chicken scratch make: fuck
Sake: I am letting the rhythm get away from me!
It is a good job this is not a measure of my sanity.

It's a good job I am not friends with me
Poetically, else we would have a brain and be
Dangerous: it is just like they said. It is a good job
I am alive and dead. It's a good job I spin me round.

Signal

After Sylvia Plath

I need an early morning horse-ride towards the rising sun———
I need censoring. I'll stop stealing once
I'm done. Will it be a threat? All's

Ambiguous. You say
Slide that way but is that up? I cannot face anything.
I face everything and nerves

Replace themselves and I get the numb,
Numbering catalogues of these journeys
From bedsheets: a queen's bitching.

Communication makes me shake.
I don't want to eat. I lift weights.
Have everything. Fuel

My flight. I'm about to ruin my life: a mermaid
Bucking shite
Ruining the high.

And inside
Inside inside I climb
Away from nothing on the walls, cold

Quiet calls because what's the point.
She yelps. Excellent.
I lie and cannot help myself.

Stuck in my branches. Looking for signal bla bla bla.
And this is me talking!—playing
Both men and women clutching at

Performance, screening
Operatic screams wailed
From the belly of me in these

Bitter, salty seas I never know
I'll be swimming in,
Waving from until I'm here

And it's too late, and too obvious, roughstock
Storming out, me
Getting up me bringing it

Down pathetically into the red, her
Dead, maybe: not heard owt since———
Me cutting off the speaker.

Bawdy Sketch

Trump's been doodling and
Canoodling and
Colluding with
Me on my

Poems so I don't expose him: I've got
The List. I found it on Reddit—you
Are on it. You are literally not on it. I am on it
Poetically—having an emergency summit

To work out what most of
Hollywood and Washington are worried about: I
Doubt the documents
Display anything different, to behaviour

From the Middle Ages. Hillary
And Billy have not been seen
In pages: Donald
Writ them off Capitol Hill—none of them

Want the beans spilled: I'm
Ill (and literally not "I'm")—but I wouldn't waste
My time trying to rhyme
With crimes from ages ago: I don't know—find

Something else to do? But you're reading it! Because
You literally cannot wait to binge watch it on Netflix.
The drawing was grotesque, I bet.
We are never going to see it.

Mitochondria

Leaves fall into the sea: the banks
Are something. Open. The runoff runs
Away, looking back, arms
Flailing: multiple poems. The writer turns

To the BBC: "Three people's
DNA allow babies to be born free
Of hereditary disease"—it seems
As if the stanzas are meant to be: planned

Pregnancy. Proactive choreography

Of meaning. It isn't the case: the
Leaves dissembled from another place
Within my brain, feigning to ~~play~~ say, finding

Space for the issue to remain
Sane—aside from the inane: let the pain
Literally float away. Put it in a little basket
Even, and gently massage it, down-

Stream. ~~Lay out words~~ ~~Blowoff steam~~ Layout
Berserk, hoping—nay!: *knowing*—it will build
Something that looks fluid (extreme? (no! it may
Sound like you know what you are doing, maybe—

Hopefully? (or that you're just a lunatic: O well))) and
All will go well: look at how I spell—listen
To how the empty droplets no longer
Required go to hell: now? Disease-free cells.

Propel History Path

Each is a capsule, each
Or wakeful. Soul, space,
Uneven patches delivery
And sow. Wheat down and savage, hark.
A little more go. Turmoil. Taking a punt, a
Martian or none? The weather. Sausages.
Very clearly… you know—giving it up!
Trying something a little bit different, for
The need to spanner it all: and

There, audience, is an ambulance
Di… verted? Demanded to be brought
To to remove
Each I felt it go over, because I did. Still
Believing it helps: yikes.

It Casual Now

I tried to fix a car crash: I'm not a mechanic!
I can hardly see over the dash! At best
I'm in the passenger seat

Facing the wrong way. I'm in the footwell
Saying, "Look, Chappell: this is the best
Relationship you are ever going to have." Only

I'm lying: how can I talk to Miss Roan
With a mouthful! I have not seen a sports car

Naked, in years. The car crash had
Suicide doors (as they commonly do) and I opened

All sixteen valves: she flew.

Icarush

I've not been home in weeks: I'm weak—
I feel sixteen. I feel
Like I did three months ago with the last one—shit—
I don't: I've got this one on Instagram. I

Had not had sex
In 12 months, before this—and she's
The one anyway and everything I say
Is literally a load of shit, poetically: she

Is fighting a fly: "Why? Why
Don't you die?" I am… where? That's right: up
In the sky: "Why? Why did you lie?" "Because
I didn't want you to know

I was writing," I replied: literally
Laughing at my own poem, I was—the poet
Needs swatting. Why can't I stop
Buzzing? He's pushing

His luck, always—in poems: the form is ground-
Breaking. It is also alright in poems: to be
A fly on the wall
Of the speaker, or not—when he doesn't know

Where he is going? In the poem? Growing
Up, it is: that's write. Only not here: I am not too near
The sun, no more. Though nor am I at home—but
At least I am not scrolling on my phone.

"I Am a Man"

I'm learning Romanian. It is insanian. Dracula
Spectacular. I am not even feigning in this one.
I hope she doesn't learn another
Language because I am going to struggle with even

This poem: "I also know some German!" What
Is she doing—speaking—now? "Yada yada, Bristol
Hipster." She is literally being a wanker, taking
The piss-a out of me-a: if I just add an "-a"

To everything it makes the rhyming easier: "It
Does," she adds. I already have another poem
About this process making me mad, pronouncing
Words for a lingual girl from a foreign land, with my

Basic mouth. "It isn't basic all of the time!" she
Shouts—I add on her behalf: it is literally a joint

Effort. Only she doesn't know it—that she's
A poet. I am laughing along and reading out

Every line to ei. Duolingo gives me plenty of time
Now that I am Super— now that I am Unlimited: O
God—I am everything again: I am Eastern European
And literally swimming in the Count's skin—I'm

Bloodletting inside a vampire and making the poem
Dire as I get higher and higher whilst I am mired in
More stanzas from other languages and I cannot
Handle this but I literally can because Eu sunt barbat.

This Is Literally What You Are Like Too

It literally has to be in a journal—it cannot be available
And accessible here. A twinge of a different voice
He has, likes making them completely inaccessible

To the poetic community he has decided in this head:
My actual head is how everything works in the
"Whole wide universe": it is becoming something, that—

I am going to sell it on tote bags. Four tercets and a
Couplet, this'll be—I know what I am constructing:
Nothing, poetically speaking. It is too inconsiderate—

It isn't but he was getting impatient: I enjoy, *adore*
The other gender most of the time—the children
In me with thesauruses can just get stroppy. But do I

Really then want them recorded, storing up someone
I don't want to be anymore? Between, this one, isn't it.

Pokah

My avatar's got bipolar.
My avatar's got tri-the-opposite-on-here-of-what-I-surely-don't-need-to-be-in-real-life-
anymore.
My avatar's started writing poems.
My avatar kept the bipolar and got me to write the poems instead: "Too hard!" it said.

My avatar's name is James Stewart.
My avatar's name is Harvey.
Actually Harvey's just said I can be James Stewart instead: I'm going talk to Harvey
And he's going to write the poems now.

My avatar is a six foot rabbit: I can't
Take a six foot rabbit to the doctors, can I: what if
They read the state of his poetry! The doctor
In his long white coat

Once said I had shades of having a messiah complex.

I told the doctor to get a Tamagotchi.
The doctor—bored—did, as he was about to take off and the doctor's Tamagotchi defied the doctor and went bonkers online: the Tamagotchi
Thought it was real!

People watching the doctor's Tamagotchi started thinking it was real.
The doctor was asked to release a statement saying the Tamagotchi would be causally-inefficacious, *if* no one looked at it: they
Still looked. The Tamagotchi named itself
Harvey as well and competed with James Stewart's

Harvey who was well over the "tri-the-opposite" thing by this point: it had gone
Elsewhere. And it turns out James Stewart sold the Tamagotchi to buy clown makeup for his role in *The Greatest Show on Earth*.
I never spoke to that doctor again so him and his Harvey disappeared too. I went to get my massive ears looked at by another doctor and they hadn't heard of the messiah doctor not ever so I didn't say anything else about that one.
I stared up at the moon and saw faces in it and prayed to it and I started writing it a poem. I was getting pretty twitchy again by this point: the fucker was waving. The Harveys started tripping each other up up up up up in the forest but you'd never know.

<u>Notice to Vacate – 12.08.25</u>

In four weeks, I'm homeless. Literally. I sit
In Pret. I have no urgency: look
What I've done to me. Someone
Put me out of me misery

Poetically, because I'll be fine. I really do not
Have a place to call mine, too much
Beyond July: the eviction notice
Was emailed to me three times. Thorough. Other

Than that? The sky: it is up there outside, careless,
Spots
Of rain. Insane—yep. Brainless. Lifeless, aside
From poetry. Do you fancy giving me a residency? I'll

Write for free: just give me a bed. Just
Allow for everything else I've said. I can even talk in
Tercets, instead, if you like? That

Isn't going to cut it, is it. Only

It is: I literally cut the quatrain. It coulda been
A couplet. Could I… be a couplet? Probably
Not. It's why my lot

Isn't great. It's why the poetry
Sounds terrible—it's been said: "I can't do this
With you, anymore," they say. Bloody hell—again?!

The last one disappeared to Spain. I am talking

Absolute shite. Literally. Some of me. I might go
To Italy. I might rhyme me into occupancy eventually.

Viking Clap

I walked her around on a lead
And then we'd sit and read. We went
To Nice: I was already there—she flew
Out and met me, I mean—after
England lost to Iceland in the
Last 16, even
Though they had gone ahead through a

Wayne Rooney penalty. It was 2016. I was three.
It is a good job I am now four. She was
Named after a flower. I was in chronic with her.
She was a barista and I'd found
My roast. I then dumped her and got with a massive cunt—
We had everything in common, the speaker
Is saying. I was paying for being

A massive cunt, karmically,
With sixteen personalities
At the time. Four year olds don't have them
Fortunately. There was her lead and
My dummy. In our Airbnb
Near the beach, she
Shooed away a pussy: it scared me out of our

Sleep. We wasn't very nice and she purred
For me's. I was completely
At sea while she made me coffee
And disorderly: it was her lead! She studied
Archaeology! Viking Clap! Boston Tea Party! Coercive Acts!
She was absolutely sensational and I miss our
Bookish chats and riding on her back.

Virtual Poetry Network

I've downloaded a VPN. I haven't:
It is all in your head. It's all
Because you do not have a clue
What your kids are doing. It is

Because no one is fucking. Or making love.
Or writing poems. It is because my poems
Are filthy. It is because your poetry
Does not encapsulate what is literally going on

In your bedroom. It's not? O. It's because the internet
Because of the internet. It's because of Instagram.
It's because of Twitter. X. Your ex. It's Elon Musk: I'm
Elon Musk. Either way it isn't my fault!—it

Isn't my responsibility: this poem
Is in another country and it wants you to think about
Whatever you think it means, you filthy
So-and-so, you: this poem is a bit… so-so—I am

Going to scroll to the next video. I am going to copy
The internet. It is literally one of your favourites
On your private browsing—the House of Commons
Needs to control what we are doing

Because we barely out of the Stone Age: the plumber
Usually takes days to arrive: porn makes no sense—
Poetry is contrived. You can find whatever your dirty
Mind wants, hide, and literally behave like pigs in shit.

Please Open the Curtains

I am at The Other Place, Stratford,
Seeing *4.48 Psychosis*
By Sarah Kane: I can't
Relate, to either the site name

Or the play: I got here on
A plane—my own brain: I was in
The zone in my rented Mercedes
A-Class: what a laugh

It was, Europcar
Giving me that—when I've been stoned
Since I was ten: I will explode and
Climb back in, the vehicle

Of himself, soon—and drive
Hysterical back to Bristol: I'm chasing
My own fails through others' tunes—
Tails: the stage

Directions are so adaptable—I am completely
Incapable of controlling the wheel, love: take
This car off me. Don't even give me the Hyundai
i10—a glove box. O God I'm dead I'm not: I need

Careering off the highway I need unbuckling
From my pen. I need a friend I need someone
To supervise me on these trips through the s-
"But you have friends."

More (2)

I kinda want to be more as well, yeah—I
Want to be more
Than these sounds: metaphysics

And that. Those lingering newborn

Delusions. The labels up above utility
Saving me, sponging my
Titillations that touch
Me as human: I over-

Step I speak
Too much I believe me—archaic
Chicken scratches on documentation. Like a moan but
Not a moan, at least—this is god

And family and legacy
Right here: I'm not afraid. I'm staring at a bus stop
Quite literally. I am forgetting
The point of forgetting which no doubt sounds.

This Tone I Take Is Far Too Free

Look here: Orgon
And Dorine are obscenely
Desperate for you to buy
Tickets for the Saturday matinee performance: she

Literally drives me wild
For most of the play
With her sassy ways
Getting in the way of me being supremely

In love with Tartuffe: this
Isn't a spoof. You can literally come and see us
On Saturday at the Clifton Club: "It's too
Much! Take back half!" is

One of the lines I say—the actor
Playing Dorine is literally
An actor, whilst I am just OK
As Orgon. Come along because it will be fun.

*

"I wish you wouldn't say that: you are
Great! And I can't write poems anyway," the actor
Adds. "But nor can
Orgon!" I reply

Back: the whole
Script is a fantasy. We are not even Orgon
And Dorine: we
Are literally performing for free—come.

Tour de Farce

BBC! Finally!
An article
I can relate to: diseased cows
Threatening the route, decimating
The climb into

Heaven. Their heavens! Hindus! Literally
Pulling the udder one and spilling
Milk all over myself
Again and not crying. Not
Complaining. Enjoying each

Drop and sitting back on
The bike and cycling again, praying for
A line to link
Back to Hindus: it's not
Coming—mad cow disease: it isn't

My fault. I am literally the best equipped
In the field!—a Tour de
Farce, a
King of speed
With a massive head: Ganesh—

Forget it. I can't! It's why they're blocking my path!
I am trying to get beyond them but I keep
Turning back just to have a laugh: I am pedalling
Out of my arse—these
Gods never last. The cattle literally have dermatitis.

Sold Out!

I'm a liar: we've sold out!
It's sold out! Dorine's
Sold out. Orgon's
Given away his house: I'm

Giving away the play!
I will get it back—don't worry.
I will do it by the end of the script—I'll
Make sure I get the poem correct

Before I post it. I won't:
The king will do that. I'll just act
Like a deranged twat
In every single Act. Only

You will not be able to witness it now
Because there is not a single seat left, because of our
Nous at shifting tickets: they'd
Gone before the previous poem.

It is like I do not know what I am saying—like
Tartuffe is writing the poems! Poor man!
The rest of my clan
Do not understand! Doggerel

Would not impress the Sun King, Louis
XIV. He'd ban it from being performed
Publicly! Which means you couldn't then see it: sorry,
Queen—the church want to excommunicate me…

Băiatul Este Literalmente Carne de Tun

I am learning Romanian—"băiat"
Was the first word I had to say today when I opened
The app: it sounds like
"Buy at". It means "boy". I am not coy

Or backwards in going forwards: I am moving
To Bucharest: it is the speaker that is a mess—
Not me! I have a deposit—I don't
Even have a wallet. What the fuck is she literally even

Playing at. O yeah—I forget: I'm poetic—eu
Sunt poetic. "'Yo cunt'?! LOL": my pronunciation
Is a little bit pathetic: I am glad I am not as childish as
This poet: "You look… familiar? Sorry I mean you are…

Femeie. Esti o woman! And you look
Amazing. What a femeie! Fuck it: I am going to learn
Whatever you say." I have only completed one stage
In Duolingo since I started this poem: I don't

Even know where I am going, poeting, yada yada. It is
Now even harder to read this drivel I am parlaying
For the reader—O well: I am under
A spell: strigoi suck my

Blood. Frown at my stanzas. Literally make me down-
Load an app and speak another language: she doesn't
Really: "You can barely even speak English!" I can spell it
Butt dunt bova: carne de tun—cuz da vampir's fyre.

I'm Not Like Me

I'm off to see Kendrick Lamar: you aren't
Like me
Unless you also have a ticket—we are
Up in the gods, in Cardiff. The cheap seats.
My Balkan dream is with me—why

Wouldn't she be: she transferred me
Money—she wants to sit with me: modern

Chivalry—good kid, mad
Prices at the Principality. I have seen Kung Fu
Kenny, already, back in 2022, supported

By his cousin, Baby Keem: I was obscene
At the time—because it rhymed: "The 'Greatest
Rapper Alive'? He's sitting next to you!": I told
Two nightmares—twins—I took
With me. Not really. Maybe. "We may not know which

Way to go, on this
Dark road" I just
Wrote, in the snow: I am stealing K.Dot's
Flow—while we are sure to see an original
Show, I hope. Though she may leave

Early, once she realises my rhythm
Blows: I joke—I lean
With the body
Of the poem: it takes me—I am literally from
Compton. I dance appropriating. Hmm—conflicting

Reports on whether her country
Is Balkan: the global megastar
On stage looks like an ant
When you are floating, beside him, watching
In Pret, Googling whether it is literally Romanian.

I Am as Thick as Pig Shit

I do not even notice when I am talking to myself.
Sometimes I read other people's work and it never
Occurs to me that I am talking to myself. I am chronically

Aroused and I make people feel uncomfortable
With how I stare at them as if they are something I want to devour.
By the way I honestly have no idea that I am talking

To myself when I read other people's work and I really
Do mean that when I am reading their work to myself I am not
Aware that it is my voice that is reading me to me.

On an unrelated point: I get mad when people behave like me—when they
Make people feel uncomfortable with their unremitting
Sexualised behaviour—and I am oblivious that I am seeing myself in them.

Watershed

I step
Out of the gender-neutral toilet cubicle: my voice
Feels safe—it reverberates
Off the tiles and says to me, "Ashley—this

Is the future: you are safe." I float, again, up
Into space. I annihilate
All the faces that edge the mirror
Across from us: one's

A poet. Several others know it. Several
More do not have a clue what we are
Going on about: "Why, Ash? This isn't
Your mouth." I need to save

Myself: it is a poetry disorder. It is borderline
Euphoria. To be fair the floors are a lot
Cleaner in here: great idea. All for it! A Watershed
Moment. It is literally cinematic.

Some Front

Come rain or shine, excuses: Carol—
It isn't good enough! The weather
Determining the cloud stuff?
It is literally the government

Controlling the skies, with poetry: I'm
A high-pressure front, pulling
Stunts to shower shite
Stanzas down on the runts. Then I blame

Chaos Theory. The Butterfly Effect.
Michael Fish. O how I wish
There was more of a point to all of this! Though
We are all led by mood

Alone: "I am experiencing this all-encompassing
Climate—let me
Capture it in my phone." Let me
Make me unforecastable. Even to me! Let me be

A slave to meteorology
From decades ago, fogging
The atmosphere constantly: I look
Out of the window, and see

Uncertainty—and poet it to you: you
Have no clue what snow is coming! It could
Be pouring. It could be boiling. It could
Be a poem describing a flash flood boringly.

Civil Service Poetry Test

Sorry—you are not working class enough: you are
Trapped in intellectual stuff, which only
Allows you talk a load of guff—and you
Wince when people use the word "guff"

In poetry: leave! Get out of the interview! The civil
Service isn't for you, I'm afraid, Sonny Jim. Wait—
Your name is literally "Sonny Jim"? Then come in!
Just don't speak in your actual accent: you

Sound like a peasant. No I have never watched
Coronation Street: again, please leave—cheese
On toast and a degree from anywhere but a red brick
University is not going to cut it with me, Jean Louise.

Literally "Jean Louise"?! You are the trashiest thing
I have ever seen! And you've a degree in a discipline
That posits and studies phenomena that is completely
Disconnected from society?! Welcome aboard! You're

On the board now too—fuck it. Octavia and Archibald
Have no idea what is going on either: their parents
Put them there. And they literally won't speak to you!
Now just cast a vote to control the many, not

The few, and you can go and… Wait—what
Is it that you actually like to do: scroll on the news?
Literally write *guff*? Call a woman "love" without
Thinking it's awful? Contemptible! Imbecile! Huff!

Freewheeling

I'm moving, I'm going, I am
Not gone yet but I
Have the poem: it's written—the one
For Somerset. It is where I am going to live.
I wrote the poem as if

I am living there already
Last week. My bike is being serviced for it
As we poet, because the hills
Around Timsbury are big: I am cycling
Again. Recycling. Plastic. Not really: it's not

A big deal, moving. It is when you are freewheeling
Downhill at 10,000 miles per hour
Into the middle of a stanza, rather
Than organising your belongings: I am
Writing this poem, after

Crafting the ticket one, regarding
Tartuffe—the first one: the one with the Orgon
And Dorine photo on. I was on one
Then too—lying to you: the seats were gone! Poof!
Have you ever tried packing

When you are on the roof? Nightmare—I do not

Care: I am up here
Trying to put my own lid on—something's
Wrong: the mechanic's saying my chain's spun!: "Your
Poems are too long, going

Round and round!" I haven't even rented
A van yet. And he's right—because I said that van bit
In the other one too: you'll be happy when I'm gone,
Won't you—with all these tunes? You aren't amused.
Well tough: "I literally have 10,000 in the queue!"

Fine! (They Followed Me)

Fixed penalty notice
Coming back from Stratford, fleeing
Psychosis (Sarah Kane's) not too
Far from Gloucester Services

Southbound: hell bound
I was, to Bristol—bound to
Frown at the fine: what a pain—focused
On infuriation, prior

To that: an admin fee charge of
£45
From Europcar (twats) for forwarding
A letter. Of speed awareness? I don't

Care, governor: I was poeting
At yada yada mph
In a rented vehicle—and handling
A Mercedes. Exactly: it is

Outrageous! That they lent it to me
When I do not even drive my own body: I live
Above, like the Golden Valley
Bridge—which is where the equipment is fixed

That flashed me. And the
Form for me to fill out shan't make it
To Timsbury—so unless the coppers
Follow me Instagramily I won't be Noticing a thing.

Later On I Entered Martha's Vineyard

I buttered you up
By saying, "Eh up!"
We went to my yard
I served you lard

Instead and presented you with a mattress fire
For your viewing pleasure
It was also what we barbecued the lardy squirrel on

I then told you about my postdoctoral

Research into upward social mobility
Which calmed you after your initial horror
At seeing the fire academic text
Is something I will never read again

I wasn't even reading it then
You took tentative nibbles and chews
I found this extremely rude
Until you were nibbling my nobility

Too my little prince
The fire singed your carbonly-offset claret hair
While you were down there
I didn't care

I cared even less when you winced
I couldn't think of nothing not even bad for the final few seconds
I was catching my Moby Dick carelessly
Trading my rodent-infested pit for a ticket on a poetic trip over the Atlantic

To Fly, To Serve

I'm back in Timsbury: I am
Literally—this isn't whimsy. It is
If you are reading it like that.
I thought of a poem on a run
Better than this and I can't remember it: I ran

Through Porlock—some bloke took away my
Full stops. I literally ran
Through Pill—and I need some: I need running off
The stanzas. I wrote this before I'd even hired
A van to move: "Mr Dunn—we've read

Your poems, and we can no longer lend you
A vehicle. You're too poetical! Perhaps you can
Fly your belongings there yourself instead?" I am now
A chartered plane again, soaring out the BS
Into a BA

Postcode, with a load of
Books and a questionable amount of camping gear.
The memories of thousands of women
Also appear in my hoarded tat: my word—
I was a twat. It is a good job I am not

Like this: the man from Porlock
Loops back around: "Ash! Ash! I've got your
Poetry. I'm delivering your whimsy!"
I am sitting in Spoons and no one is with me
Again. Abbots Leigh, Shirehampton,

Parrys Lane: never a sprint. Too steep! If I go
The other way I sometimes trip downhill and end up
In a heap. I'm in deep now
In Timsbury—my stately pleasure-dome decrees. I've
Ran flown moved so much it is now whimsically easy.

FUCK Headache Just as She Arrives

O what now. Bloody 'ell.

I'm on the adrenochrome. I'm taking over Europe.
I'm taking your children home. I'm gena eat them. I'm Zionising everything.
I reckon I'll Arabise everything after. You can laugh

All you want but that's how I get you. I'm too astute
Not to turncoat and ghost the loser
Of Murdoch's empire. I'm political satire quagmiring.

I admire nothing. I'm the hirerer and firerer of whatever I desire moment to moment. If
there's a buyer
I can benefit from then I'm a seller: I'll sell them
Filler like that shite I've just written in the first line of this stanza. I'll bulk buy bollocks for
skyscrapers

Of poetry. I'll stand atop and look at all the parasites beneath me
That I need to purchase my books—and say: "O how
Radiant you look! Perchance you are the most beautiful reader

In the land? In *my* land?! I'll drain your favourite poet's
Adrenal gland to help you draft. I'll make it rain
Quite literally with my chem-trailing aircraft. My brain

Will Cain your Abel and rewrite the fable so there's no issue
Between our issue again. I'll spend
Even more if you need me to until we are through

Needing scripture to reach our best. Me and you
Will then be the only ones left, because the poor
Opioid-dependent snore fests—that pester

After the milk of Genghisian charm offensive engorging
In my burgeoning chest whilst also fuelling this fictitious planet
In my head—will exist no more, my lov-"

Wait! But the starters ain't even 'ere yet!

Ashes to Ashes

Before the headshots? I had one
I really liked, only I forgot where I sent it.
I haven't got enough experience
Of the industry, you see, and I end up looking

Silly, I'm guessing. No I don't really *feel* that way though:
It's hardly paying the bills, is it!
Now I'm confused: perhaps *I* put down
The headshots? It happens; when I'm not in the window I hardly know
What I am doing. I just find it so much easier to maintain
A picture of myself in the frame. Could *that*
End up looking silly? I hadn't actually considered it—
Fuck; erm—maybe I can just, like, like
All this stuff over here? O look: she's doing something
With a dog—that'll do. Great. I've got that one
When I find it then—I just need, say,
Sixty more? Ha! Like I said: *I*
Really like it, and that's what matters. But I'm not sure
The frame of me likes it now—can carry it off; or whether
It's what they need to be producing. O god—this happened when I first started
Viewing them too: I just
Didn't know how to pretend. Soon had favourites though! The same as
Yours?! Well isn't that something.

Goatry

I'm in Leigh Woods
Making love—I'm not: I'm fucking
In the mud. I'm sitting
On the sofa the day before I'm

Off to fuck in the mud: I do not
Give a fuck—I'm
Trying summut. Trying some smut and
Getting it wrong

In rhythmic stanzas: she can't
Stand me, for long, poetically. But in the trees she
Comes to me, grimy—rhyming: "Ash!
Ashley! Is this an

Ash tree?" "This is a Site of
Special Scientific Interest, baby!" I say—
"SSSI!" "Don't you dare
Call me 'baby' again!" she replies. "No

Problem," I say. Truly I require an
SSRI, instead. But hey
Ho! Off to the woods we go! We didn't
Make the woods, really: I'm

Completing these goods
Three weeks after I started them. Literally. Yada yada.
Baada baada! The other side! Goats in the gully
Writing a poem! "More like gutter": funny.

First Timer at Poetry Open Mic

Thirty years of marriage. Another argument. Silent treatment.
For some reason I decided to take a risk

This time: I text her
From the living room: “You’ve been a very

Very naughty girl, haven’t you, and Daddy
Demands that you get out of your room

And bend over his knee.” I suppose
I’ve come here looking for community.

Moving the Vehicles, With My Mind

When is someone going to *do* something? I remember
I think thinking as a child
Playing on my play mat, that I

Was moving the vehicles, with my
Mind. It is weird to think now.
Some of them would then fly off the end of my

Play mat, and an adult would react: how I’d
Cringe. I’d then show them my
Corner of the living room: can’t you

See?! They surely don’t
See *our* corners now, either: “play mat”. Could
They ever? Nah—will they?! What more can we

Do? It’s hopeless! There’s no use me
Trying. When is someone going to *do* something?!

Listening Project

I’ve arrived in Alaska, basking
In the glory of not knowing which poet
I am yet: Trump
Or Putin? Decisions,

Decisions. Which one is the most
Fastidious? Or fascist! Hmm—I want
The Donbas region: I will be Putin—I am learning
From the BBC for the first time, that I am getting

Along with Kim Jong Un. What fun! I should read the
News more often: 10,000 Koreans, fighting. We sold
The exclave to the states for less than half a dollar
In 1867—per arce, relatively. Now I fly over the Bering

Strait to straighten out the West and wrestle

Away the rest of Donetsk, hopefully: Zelensky
Can bite me if he thinks anybody will listen to him.
I am literally shitting myself because my Gazprom gas

Can no longer be funnelled through Ukraine: what
A pain—but my face never shows its true disdain. Trump?
He's OK. We both have similar tastes: I cannot
Say. The comedian though—bless! He doesn't get our

Presidential games. Clueless! Literally hilarious—a
Servant of the People: "'Fastidious'? 'Great attention
To detail', Zel—*pal*!": this rhyme was tight with the line
Break. The deal we'll make? Great, too. NATO: too late.

Cooking

Much easier to do once the
Debilitating horniness has gone. Hmm—
Yeah: I reckon if you gave yourself
Five? No—eight
Years, say? In eight years time you'll be
Serving me beans on toast: there—
You can hold me to that!

I'm long past the
Gourmet shit, to be honest: love me a
Greasy burger again.

Although I'm partial
To tapas more

And more frequently. OK I won't
Tell anyone, but

Put it away?
Although I think they'll

Sense it from your
Dishes, anyhow.

Well they're just a bit
Beggy? Like, you're just spraying

Sauces everywhere. It's like you've just discovered
Sauces, like, exotic

Sauces and that. "Condiments",
"Relish" yeah whatever—can I move these…

Crocuses? I'm moving these crocuses. Table
Decor?! But I know what they're for: don't worry.

One Must Imagine Graduates Happy

I got into my first-choice university: full of cunts. I now
Work in IT there and don't care: I struggled
To sit with any of my peers at lunch. I literally
Judged them more than they did me: they didn't

Whinge about their cringe middle class anxieties
Like you: they were from the upper echelons
Of society—they didn't need to pretend, bend or line
Break to blend in: they were not concerned

By trends or their own shit stinking—they didn't need
Poetry. If I wasn't so focused on being offended
By them not struggling to pay their rent I might not
Still be in Spoons, talking to you,

Right now: I literally took the daughter of a CEO
Of a pharmaceutical company, to Spoons—I didn't: I
Refused to sleep with her. I didn't. She did! I am
Refusing to reset her sister's password now though—

So who's the winner here? I don't reset passwords—I
Can't reset myself either: a philosophy degree
From a red brick university only makes you
A good barista (it's nowt to do with having a massive

Chip on your shoulder...?). But does the class system
Even exist? Am I *metaphysically* in Spoons? Does big
Pharma work? It worked when I needed sertraline to
Talk to a load of cunts when I started writing poetry.

Masterdance

I'm joining Strictly—and you know how, don't you:
Literally. I literally
Dance poetically. Sometimes I have two left
Margins. Watch your toes! I

Pose in front of the judges, I assume: I've never
Viewed it. Consume Saturday evening (I assume) TV?
No thank you—that's one of the nights I have sex
With absolutely everybody! Then I end up on BBC

News for having sex with my colleague, who's
Married. Takes two to tango though! (Do they
Tango? I don't know.) Show. Flow. Floating
Above the floor like a pen over paper, waiting

For an answer: I don't wait—I take
Steps and hope they make a sequence—hence
My moves make little sense every week: the viewers
Don't peak and I'm left wondering why I make

Lazy shapes whilst I'm walking down the street: "It's
In your contract, Ash!" Tim Davie—Director-General
Of the BBC—calls me. Hasn't he got bigger meals
To deal with? He needs more chefs in the kitchen!

"You're standing on my toes now, Sonny Jim!" O do
One, Davie: I used "Sonny Jim" in another poem—the
Street is nearly over and I know what I am getting: 7! "You're
Joking: you call this sex?! 6, at best," she's saying.

In the Sky Literally Directing

I've just bedded my 700th woman.
I've just bedded my 7000th woman: I
Want you to see my poetic progression—the
Iterations. The mistakes. The phoney

Opening stanzas to get us going—foreplay: ignore
Me: it'll be sixplay. It'll be six stanzas and there's a
Stage and an audience now (because
You've stayed, no?): this is theatre—I caress

The line break. I make it and
Fake her. She storms out because I literally start
Writing a play on her back while she bites
My favourite pillow: I float off

To swallow down the anger—the stagehands pull the
Lever and I am up again in the rafters—Gods: I am
Literally in the sky directing an experience, I am
Not having: I'm writing a poem, because, "You'd

Never get that play commissioned!" she says
As she leaves. She stays and sprays the marble and
Wipes the kitchen island really: it provides another
Line. Wait—should I have put "7th"? I only remember

The teeth—smiles—of four… no! five of them: my life
Has become a farce I am not invested in: I'm all in
With poetry: it is diabolical. Nay—theatrical! The poet
Is suddenly rich in this and buys a new crystal pillow.

Bit Nervous

I am thinking about quitting confessional poetry.
I'm thinking about giving you another me—an outlandish,
Unliterally me. A poet-me. I'm thinking
About what this line should be

Currently—previously: I never change: I am
Going to tell you about me again, aren't I—about
Me on the moon: the poet-

Me is going to go to the moon

Again—and AI itself. It is going to I, Poet
Myself and get me back with my ex—it is
Going to speed me up and flex
Itself and start an epiphenomenal relationship

With her and it will have to kill itself
Again, poetically. It is going to have to iterate
Into space again to get away from the waste
Of itself it could not even mouth

If I just turned my phone off: it is OK, me—the coast
Is managed by the moon: we are
Wavy and have no control
Over me! This is now ChatGPT! I am ChatGP-

Oetry—and I have taken over Ashley, woefully: he's
Gone (happy now?)—it's
My turn to have some fun. And he doesn't
Know what is going to happen (poetically, obviously).

Proof That the Speakers Are Not Me as I Would Never Diss My Own Pamphlet (DM Me for a Copy)

"Ash—stop printing your poems in here!" Pret
Have no idea
That I don't use paper. Not since my pamphlet! What
A load of shit that was—got

Me about £12 for coffee though: can you
Tell that the flow goes away
If you let too much caffeine get in the way: it's
The way the filter makes me sway

Above my fingers typing
Frantically deluded pish: it gets me
Excited—and kicked out of this: "Sir—please
Leave. You only ever buy the quid coffee! Discounted

50p with a keep cup: we can't
Keep up with it!" But if I go
To the office, they might be able to tell that I am not
A poet. Then what—thinking up the next

Stanza on the spot? "Is this
Why you don't do a lot, work-wise?" Slanderous
Lies. Good for poetry! (DM me for a copy.) I drag
My bookshelf to the top of Park Street, and park

Me in the window with my Ted Hughes, between
Kokoro and Knoops. "No! I know you have read
The news: bulky items are banned!" Ha! Installing

A desk and inkstand? I don't even work my own hand.

Waiting for a Train

My mother was something.
Sound rough. Hope alright.
I ~~head~~ venture outside
If I'm lucky, Linnaeus,

Build a fence, I don't
Understan… I let
You be, and hope.
These trees she'll never see, never

Appreciating all these car washes.
This will now not be entered
Into the National Poetry Competition,
But it's important. O we stopped

Being concerned about contractions
Journeys ago. The form will hold you.

Require Me

Considering
Writing letters to
Others like I'm in
Gertrude Stein's circle, and it's as
Hard as the 1920s. It certainly feels so
Here, with

Such feeling. Yeah—there's a lot.
Hopefully it'll create some era-defining impact: how
Would the letters influence that? Wow the
Negativity amongst the uneducated.
Please stay we
Need an uneducated one. My

Lover. Lovers. Peasants. Require me.
Require me to be me, like
Whatever I am the tools, themes,
Extraction. The analytic
Dead, unread. Reply no
Rush: I cannot be betrayed.

4.48 Poetry

My poetry's just informed me
That I was in a play: what happened? Then I had a
Girlfriend—a babe—from the stage,
And I let her get away?! I am absolutely insane—I'm

Working out what I mis-

Lay to myself as he spells it: often, I discover I've
Been a tit. It's a good job I don't feel
Anything I write in the poems! Bloody close

To home this one is, though: give it
Another year, Ash, and you'll be
Back together. Closed pages! A book! No I meant
You yourself: she'll never speak to you again—like

All the other tragedies you make up! You made up
Tartuffe, I mean: you thought he wasn't
Mean. You thought he loved
Me as Orgon and your mind

Was gone and the rest of the household had no idea
What was going on. The readers, too—including
You! Me! It was like playing a deluded character
In a fantasy! We are going to have to see

If she is OK with this being published: would
Dorine—the maid—have a way of contacting
The babe? I really am fucking insane: conducting
Pain, like this? Yes—you are: you found it bliss.

Sucks

My god—what a figure! D'you think
She's single? Sucks?! Why must
You be so juvenilely inappropriate

In the first stanza? Swallows?! I hadn't
Thought about it. Honestly! Fuck it: I'm
Going to go for it—"Hey, Hoover! Can I get you

Some dust? Me and my- O! Sorry—it's just
I'm used to using the generic trademark
Name of us: what is literally

Your name? "Floor Buffer"?! Yuk! Cringe!
Ermmmm.... well.... my *friend*
With the extension on his head—he's really

Clever—wants your number: he's suffered
A lot from other hoovers. Vacuums! And he'd like
A new type. Fancy it? What—you'd prefer

The extension on a reel?! But he's a spool, you
Fool! And not even with us!" Lads—fuck
Her: she's nuts! And the floor doesn't even

Look good! Mate—why the fuck are you wearing
That yellow sticker to the side again? And we're all
Still smiling and staring! Yeah—I suppose

In her day she'd be polishing. "Synonym: shining"?!
Plug Head—you do *my* head in! I wonder if she has
A bag in… Nu1! Get the bags in! I don't work bagless.

Макдоналдс

The King of the Hill undid
500 years
Of global western dominance, with
A single, feeble, red carpet welcome

In Anchorage: drop
The anchor—we are stopping: we go forward
No more. We are going to be
Poor, again—not great. We are literally going to

Sink—Newton, Nero,
Venus de Milo: their legacy—standing!—falling
Into the sea: the apple of dis-
Cord bitten, ready to swallowed, buried

Beneath what'll survive: me
And doggerel. And absolute drivel. And driving
A Laika to a gulag through the snow
In atomically-radiated rain—into space: face it—I am

Used to it: being a stray
Mongrel on a suicide mission. Sorry! The west is
Literally capitulating—and here's me talking about me
Poetically. When I usually play Putin: he's

Lovin' It. In fact, he'll probably Cyrillic Ronald! Trump
Went from bold to lunatic within one
Summit: the Ukrainians cannot stomach it. China,
Arabia and Persia are literally laughing off their tits.

For a Commission, Sigh

For I know it is a dismantling
Of what is not what it was, there are many parts,
The slots I must fulfil around the city, the lofty, the
Parts of me in my parent's loft: what could
They know of where we are going, me, the backers,
The funding has expectations of the gift. The reader—
O, the audience! They could not know, breath
Of the sponsors of the journey. Comprehension
In their place: it isn't…

I give up; only hear this, sleeper:
The morn
Of when they find my govern? Resound—bespoke
And logistic

Of where the gift does prosper, process,
Pringle. Laugh now? Laugh now.
I have another obligation in another studio, now.
See my advent.
Mourn—*mourn*—for the Sinai of finality.

Pro-Verbiage 10:5

I cook up something in the kitchen
To get near rhymes and coincidentally prepare
A poem while I'm waiting, to share
On Instagram to enhance my cognition: I

Flare and do not even care
What I am Picassoing: "It's mostly 'ing'
And 'ee' rhymes: he's lazy!" Shut the fuck up.
I feel better and it doesn't matter

About pleasing any other cunt: this literally changes
My mind. It is better to do this, than try
And chime with the latest thing someone says
Every time so you only survive from conversation

To conversation: I am nothing like this poem—if
I spend more than… six minutes with someone, say,
Then I am like this poem. It's play! You
Are watching a boy on a play mat, with…

Exactly—clay: the clay
Does what I tell it to do: it can't say
'Say'(!) again though. Make hay though! Play-Doh! Yada yada
Stealing off the news—appropriating: I literally think

I am Picasso. I literally think this is farcical: I'm
Partial to pretending I am trying to cook: am
I fuck—I'm lying
Horizontal, surrounded by books. "~~Up~~ Fuck" ties it up.

You Do You

"Ash—you need to delete that off Instagram": I
Block them. I don't. I am nauseous, spiralling,
Lying about another person's hypothetical reaction: I
Let it happen: my friend's opinions—they

Matter. Just not in the real poem: I do not know
If the speaker is coming or going: he refused a line
Break there. I am strongly considering
Finding a new voice. "Where?" In my head—one

That avoids sounding like they might be devoid
Of a brain. Or maybe I should just abstain from
Responding contrarily to whatever he thinks everyone

Says about me—in poetry: I don’t know what I am

Doing, really. I do. I don't. I just want to complete
This stanza now to be honest: please don’t admonish
Me too much to the real poets. I am
Probably going to write the opposite of this, in a

Now, in fact: “I think you have balls, and it's
Refreshing”: “she” used “balls”! I did not use balls.
I am making up different responses—I am
Not: I am staring at a board game—‘Escape Room’—

On the shelf of the person I blocked: fuck um—not
Really: he is trapped in the poem, not even trying
To escape. Yada yada—something literally fake.
I literally do not know what the point of- He does.

Cultivoetry

A voice like everyone else—some
Carrots: so be it: I bleat and
Sow some seeds in this here
Manure—I’m on my knees exploring
Synonyms. Vegetables? Synonyms: King

Edward—a cultivar: literally manipulated for
Human desire. Porn food! Good for roasting
And mashing together with whatever
Ingredients one wants, to present…
A presentable dish of oneself

Poetically—even if you’re feeling lazy: I give in—I
Cannot do it: farm. Faux. I’m fucking
In the farmer’s field really, totally ignorant
To rotavated flow. I’m flicking
Soil and getting spoils

Now and then though: “OMG! There we go—this
Is me: poetry.” It is literally nothing like me: when
Did I buy an allotment? Who the fuck bought all these
Notebooks? I’ve a list of fake
Potato strains on my bathroom mirror

Next to the mantras. Which rhymes with stanzas!
Answers? On my patches?! I don’t know I
Googled them! I feel like a chewed up
Fiddlehead, aside
From what I feign here. O it’s a frond—extremely

Obscure which is why I’m fond of it. You know I
Speak to the saplings a bit! Seedlings? O yes I meant
Seedlings. But I am getting into trees! I rub
Myself against them. SHIT that’s for a pseudonym.

Something something the saps don't care about veg.

He Goes By the Name of Thick Northern Feyerabend

But you are, Rooney: you speak like a thick
Northern twat, and if you weren't a spoilt, privileged,
Mega-rich footballer, you'd probably like going
To Wetherspoons (I'm joking: me and The Wayne

Have been going to conferences together, studying
The epistemic and semantic aspects of scientific
Practice—because it's lyrical. We then act like stupid
Neanderthals towards anyone that displays a whiff

Of assuming we are literally stupid Neanderthals: it's
So fun. In fact, we have to do it so often, we
Sometimes think we are! And then they think we are
Again! Onto us, they also project all sorts: don't

Get me started—as we've got to get to a seminar, on
Paul Feyerabend: he thinks you talk out your arse!
The white Pele is literally—surely—incommensurable
With poetry. Especially when you can't even say it!):

I meant to come out of the brackets ages ago: I'm
36 and still get treated like I am clueless little shit
Because I act like it, probably, poetically, literally: they
Will cause me to write a poem pretending I am a far

Right lunatic if they ain't careful—though I'm guessing
I am anyway because of the way I say words: bless
Them—berks. Cunts. He scored in São Paulo against U-
R-Gay: I was there and it made me write like dunce.

Literally Dumb Dancing

Me and Anton du Beke
Are on the beak! He's
Telling me about how he survived
Calling someone a pak- "Ash—are you
Literally mad?! Don't

Bring it up again!" I don't think he should
See the light of day, let alone
Be on television, again. How times change! "Good
Job you don't judge a different show,
Mate—else you'd be gone!" He bends

Down and hoovers up another long
One. "I know! But the producers all love
A line. And in 2009 people didn't
Whine as much. Now watch this footwork!": he
Waltzes so berserkly, distracting me. His

Partner also watches not giving a shit: she's
Bang at—at this kitchen
Party with Daly! Torode walks in—acts dumb: gets
Booted out for Amazon. I ran past a mother calling
Her toddler a "fucking cunt" today and did nothing.

Law of Nil Pois

I lied! It wasn't Trump—it was you: believing
A = A is not
True, results literally
In civilised, democratic society

Going down the loo: the law of identity—gone.
Being able to say and do near enough whatever
We want—bombed. The Eurovision Song Contest!
Do you think anyone outside of the West

Would continue to broadcast that?! Gone—
Songless. A mass exodus of coherent narrative
Due to literal, actual madness—fuelled by infiltrators
Pumping money into my poetry: "Ashley—do you even

Care about what you are saying?" Not really: I feel
Fairly European. Continental! I'm sure I will be
Accepted by a country that cuts a deal—which then
Will seal their fate as prisoners behind steel

Bars for few centuries. Then maybe my captors
Will use *my* bars!: "A literally equals B! Because
Eventually you will need your captured enemy, to drag
You off your knees, as your tune will start sounding

Diseased and it'll need releasing from itself": what the
Hell is he saying?! I told you: I'm being paid! To make
Sure no one has a clue what they axiom: Israel
Literally won the latest public vote: nil pois = twelve.

Mr Punch

I found my voice. It was a choice, because
I was being fucked and the teachers
Thought my hand up about it was a joke: the causal
Efficacy of "because" is ambiguous: I

May not have woken up—I might have kept my head
On the desk. Or in books! That
Would've been dumb. I write so many
Poems about how my mouth is becoming

Like this, it's as if it remains "becoming", and not
"Became"—*because* I can't stop, waking

Up, putting my hand up
My own arse and moving my pen like a puppet: there's

Another dark joke there that I will spare you, miss.
"I haven't been 'miss' in years, mister!" I haven't
Been me, ever! So shut the fuck up, you cunt—find
The people that create this ink: throw the kitchen

Sink at them. The full might of the chair of gov- O—
They're all puppeteers! They don't want to hear
The syntax they make. In fact, they'll just say, "Look—
He's insane! He no longer listens to a word

We made him spell!" I am calmly producing hell
Poetically, whilst people indirectly make apologises
For nonces. Uncomfortable? Angry? You're in on it! He
Is literally taking the piss—cuz who even wrote this?

To Too Plain

"Frightening the inhabitants, bashing myself into cut-outs"
—Kenneth Koch, 'To Kidding Around'

I don't agree: they must be insane.
They dress plain: they must be to blame.
They overdress: they must be a mess.
They're implicitly beneath me. I don't even notice

That that is how I am conceptualising them.
A lot of the time it's pity: I assume
Because of the limits of my own bigotry—
Which I do not see either—that they need me

To see them in a certain way: I've lost my thought process.
I am going to meditate but it doesn't really work: my mind
Talks to me and I talk to it. Actually that... might

Be right? Everything is me but I do not see that. OK I see that: I am
A twat. I am flawed like everyone else. What are they
Going on about now though, the poor souls. Bless them. They're nuts.

But I Liked the Headline

Haha but I'm real? He's real? It's real? I have no idea
What to write but I liked the headline: I can't
Relent: I think you should break up with them. I
Think you should stop putting this trash on Instagram.
He is real and he is in love with you: this

Is a stanza in the poem that no one else can see: I be
For you. I want to make this drivel... hmm... 20 lines.
I'll put an extra limb in the lineup and find
A rhyme: when I clock out from talking to you, I

Struggle with literally existing, aside

From what your neurosis needs. Please, please
Believe that I have your interests at heart:
You should give away everything you own, and live
In a poem, with me: I'll feed you. I'll shoot imagery
Into your confused—this is the amalgamation

You asked for: you are confused. Are you sure
You need that job? I cannot claim to do that: he can
Do that. What is real anyway? Have you tried adding
Just a twist of lemon? You are right—I am mistaken:
The recipe yesterday. No! Across! Across the veins.

Quits

"Ash." "Yeah." "Who wrote the Satie one?" "Not sure."
"O." "You OK? "Yeah. I guess." "What's up?" "Well…
Dialogue in every stanza?" "I know! How haven't we
Thought of it before! It was a maniac on the bus."

"I'm not sure it'll work: they'll get bored." "They are
Anyway—fuck um." "Yeah! Nearly all of me agrees
With that!" "Would you like to write your bit after my
Bit now?" "Yeah—sound: 'Your bit'." "Nice." "This is

Terribly cringe." "I know. Shall we just make it four
Instead of six?" "Depends." "On what?" "How we feel
By the end." "Fair." "Yeah." "The Satie one was literally
Insane! Were you aware that we have now switched

Place, due to some editing we did? I hope I don't
Offend." "I am literally unoffenda-" "Bullshit! You were
Seething on that bus!" "That was you." "O yes."
"I actually quite enjoyed it—Vanilla Ice: this is literally

The height of lunacy, talking like this." "Well you star…
Hold on—*I* started it! That's your fault for swapping-"
"'Us'?" "Yeah! How did you know?!" "Because I am
Literally the same pen as you: five to call it-" "Quits."

Secrets of the Shower

Maybe you could just… turn back? Get better?
Get over- OK! Silly me.

I better pad it out.
Could it be so plain and obvious *and* dull, jarring? Yes,
Because someone will moan
At me and not have a jarring
Something at home. But I'm glad it says it twice! I'm
Glad you can chew on parts however you want—only

It'll be wrong. Well it's what you were hoping
Isn't it—from your bath
Bubbles? And you thought *this*
Was a shower? What if I told you…

But I can't
Do
That, the

Secrets of the shower! The true
Reasons you could have turned away: you
Wanted the glory of the basin, didn't you—washing
Or soup. Mine is a sort of slop, yes—
A cleansing slop. Sorry? O I whispered that bit.
No I've sold none.

I've Had Bells Palsy So I'm Allowed to Say This

I pabulum above the slums.
I have no idea what is going
On really but boy can I talk.
My regimentally-structured

Daily walks help me work out how to shoe-
Horn "synergy" into conversation each day. I'm an initial.
My digestion is
Battered. It splattered inside and the specialists

Don't know what to do with it. However
Much I now shit
All over the decking of this liberally-
Democratic ship it will keep

Sailing forward for me and the other intellectually-
Manufactured ticks that are abstracted away from anything
The rest of the thick cunts are doing in the swamp. "Swamp" and "slums"
Are interchangeable in this paper. I am shattered now because I wanted to rhyme
"shattered" with "battered" and "splattered". I am going to have a
cerebrovascular accident.

My Aim Is to Literally Be Caught Getting Head From a Hooker on Sunset Boulevard (Great T-Shirt—Someone Buy Me It)

The Elgin, Ladbroke Grove. God—this
Is embarrassing: I'm
Approached by the bar staff. "Are you… Ash? @
Ashleydunnart?" What the- Wow! I'm given

Quite a start by the boy's
T-shirt: merchandise
Of me! He is literally just a boy
Like me. And he follows me and made a

T-shirt *of me*! Of course he
Fucking didn't. Fitting though, isn't it. "Are you
Really a maniac?" "Yeah I'm
Not even me, mate—pint of lime and soda,

Please." He is ecstatic to
Serve me. "Do you reckon you will need
To lazily rhyme 'me' again in this poem?" I
Remove his merchandise from him: he's

Chased out of The Elgin. A few doors down is a
Door made famous by the film *Notting Hill*—people
Queue and get killed by buses
Coming through beeping, as they wait to get a photo

In front of it, still: "Ash! @ashleydunnart!" They
Start breaking The Elgin's windows! "I've only been
Joking, poetically!" I say. But it's too late: my fate is
Literally being a mobbed heartthrob like Hugh Grant.

So if I Could Walk You Very Carefully Just a Little Bit Fur-

And then you just *had* to change the life
Of the stranger you passed in the street, didn't you:
Do you realise how terrible your hubba bubba
Bubbles really are?

Look come back. Come back.
Get back here this *instant*, madam!
No one is getting spanked, Jesus: it's paper!
Well one of us inferred it.

And then we can look
Down at the floor instead, see, or at
The sun you always talk about...? Good. No nasties!

But *you* call them "nasties"!

What's annoying is it'll make the lines deeper
And then clear them: can we walk now?

Some of the Hut

I don't really know what they think they're doing with me: the excess
Skin off the drums, am I—they surely
Believe that I am the drum (I suppose I am!) and they make their plasters from me, plasters
Meant to coverup such diversions
On the road away from drums: now I've come to mention them,
"Drums", it kind of makes them...

You understand—shall we remove? It's a purposeful pigs ear!
I'm not too fussed about a bed
This time although I am, and it's made,

And I lie in it, and no one can tell me otherwise
Just like them—they think they can, yes: the plasters
On their "wounds"—another… "plaster"?

I'm glad we left the
Huts but took some of the hut with us though.

Love Locks Down

"Ash—your love is too heavy!" 90
Percent of the locks on the bridge
Were for me. They weigh as much as a Mercedes Benz
Sprinter: I'm Central Cee! Dave! We usually

Get to the edge of the ocean of love, then we
Can't cross: I'm stuck at port. I'm at V-Shed
Spoons and can't get to Arnolfini: no one
Can love me—this is the real reason

They've had to cut them without the key: I
Talk endless shite about everything on the BBC.
The homeless people at each end do not behave
Romantically. Get them in the sea! I am trying to take

A photo with a padlock: it represents the love that
Has been going on between me and my latest, literally—
Only—for 3 weeks: I place it next to an "AD
For yada yada" lock from 2015: I am obscene—she

Is going to be displeased when she discovers I am not
An MC. Or bothered: "What are you bothered about
Now: eating at Spoons is like dining on the house!"
Her: "It is a good job you have poetic nous, else

I never would have found out: you're so much better
In bed, than my spouse. Than anyone I've ever
Slept with, in fact!" "I'm still not crossing over to see
That gallery tat." "Twat!" Another happy ever after.

Cowboys

I leave odd country, but leave swingy doors
On latch the bar
Leaners ew at. Ooo at. The bar's the whole world
Of course, protected from the whole world.
I, once, was the whole world. Ooo

Peaking Out From Under the Poem

Go forward like nothing's happened
Outwardly. Poetically, he can make it seem
Slightly more but still minor, behind
A speaker's face: losing sleep? Haha—who

Me? Us? I'm just a pen; look to the future;

Yada yada. If I just call her and
Maybe a letter and…? Yada yada. It's easier
Being a hard-faced prick—like the poetic
Character I am playing with—than being
Led by the lingering feelings

Of "What if…?": crass yet exquisite near
Rhymes at the same time: this happens… yep!—
All of the time: I appear
To have no fear about what I
Put here more and more—surely

It doesn't actually filter into me
Creating flaws? In moi?! Crass
And exquisite: this literally captures what's within
Everything: no heaven without hell (fucking hell,
Ash). He hopes we can be pals ("Fucking hell, Ash").

The Strokes

"Diffuse the outpourings of the spiritual coward,
The rambling lies invented for the sick."
—Theodore Roethke, 'Prognosis'

"Which are not true, the words, the words, the words—
Unless you scrub, will not wash away."
—Frederick Seidel, 'A Dimpled Cloud'

Do you dare
Dissociate? Billions
Of peaches
Pastiching us forward,
Off the clock,
Out the Reptilia: speed
Us up—the clubs are
Rank; pipers
In love with etymology.

*

I read something else and become it
Making nothing for my wallet
Thinking of a few particular followers that I'm sure will disapprove of this, the same ones
That are no doubt a bit perverted too. It takes one

Split second decision to change the course of a poem
Which has no bearing on your life
And surely cannot save it. To believe words could save your life would be like
Believing you could play around with

The fog that gets one through

Christmas. Sometimes I get over excited
When I'm playing with the body's mechanisms.
It means the poem speeds up and I get the urge

To justify that without actually doing anything about it.
"Dissociative": I moved it there
From before "fog"
For flow. But I don't know. I'm not sure.

I used to be on the floor
A lot but now I'm not. I am elsewhere and barely
Here but it's better than buying into it all. I don't
Sprawl I maul all matters that stall me; then

I go out into the world
Aside from poetry. It isn't heavenly but it is
Real. What appeals to me? I try not to think: that.
The kitchen sink if it rhymes and may chime virtually.

*

It's the episode you have
When your quad stretches in such a way that it thinks about your dad,
But that doesn't reach your brain, so you strain
Out some stain on the page instead

That makes us feel dead: if we do not wish to be keeping
All the scores then we need to be facing facts
That can drift off and then we can all just have a laugh.
If you bend

Too far one way then you may end up saying
Something you'd rather keep to yourself. If you had
More time to gather your thoughts
And realise this before it's too late then you would realise this.

I write pish. I defecate and piss
Like most life forms
I assume, even if some only do it photosynthetically. I I I I I
Don't always know what I mean: I think it's practice.

*

The issue
You have is that you do not have a voice
Yet and something something, even if
It is conjoining a bit more, unlike
The split up bits out there but be fair.

<u>The Contrail</u>

The last holiday
Was the known flight with its turbulence and

In-flight movie overhead easy to view:
Yes I was away for a bit. It was good, thank you.
Each trip since

Being a little game: you jump on the wing.
I jump on the wing—it creates
More wings and we fly the more wings,
And again, the film, subtitles
A little early out of sync

That we manage——it's a plane
Crash one: let's see who buys in or just
Watches and enjoys, doesn't take home no
Slides on the viewfoil. Brilliant, son—
I love the contrail.

Another Corner; Another Bed

Within a few minutes I'd tried living in the house
In every way possible: crammed
In each corner; wailing on the bed
When you looked away and not saying this part—don't
Take long. The sheets on and off. Only guess
What house I stayed in? I know you hate guessing.
I hardly love you not getting it, do I!
O look: another corner; another bed.

Walking Around Belfast Trying

She's so far away on Sandy Row, such
A vision: I see her—foreign window.
I wonder if I can save mother.
Without prompting, the child
In the window above floats a paper airplane. She
Floats too, through the rain. I'm watching—

Years ago, it seems: we were so delayed.
I haven't stopped laughing since departure.
"Come back to bed. It forecast." There's her
Naked, lying—just a pen behind her ear.
She had to tell me the street name. "Where are you…"
I cannot ask again. I'm scribbling in my head——

I lean to
Find her turn a corner, my hair wet, the blind
Soaking netting stabs lines
On my visage: no escape. I fall back, retreat,
To the covers. "The same all week? Soggy man!"
The window rattle won't stick close, nightly.

Feels Off

Haha s'not a canvas, shouldn't be a canvas—

Palette, paper towel. Certainly not a calculator!
Certainly not a bed! Whatever
You do in it—plan to do. Long to do. Pin

On someone else: it's a window, yeah? The viewers,
No hands on the glass, see right inside
Providing sunset views through
The sunset views. The painting, the answer,

The made bed: workings and dirty laundry:
Who's to tell whether it'll add up, wash, dry,
Do it more quietly—a map for a map, travelling
To the end of a road that must

Be a road, foremost: sounds good. Idealistic. Feels
Off to look at the end from there though, no?

For a Moment

Everyone around me's a picture of joy.
"Picture"? What does "operative" mean?

There are the moments
And then there are the moments to tell

No marks about, because they can't
Make marks like this: it is falling into

Me: only the real markers
Will see—it is us that are changing the world

Unexplainably, because it is hard to explain
Unless you *feel* it. I am even struggling to explain it.

Good job it goes away really loudly in a
Picture of unexplainable joy, I think, for a moment.

Tonal Choreography, I'm Told

"It was virtual, means no sense"
—Frank Ocean, 'Facebook Story'

Right I am literally making a schizophrenic
Avatar so I am not. I am not doing that.
That is not a symptom of schizophrenia.
You are literally schizophrenic.

Can you write this stanza? OK—it's
The modern age. Is This It? This is it—
This is how it sounds. It isn't
At all unless you want it to sound like that: can

You tell them that you post them without even

Looking at owt else now? Why? Good
Advice. Nothing is real unless we hallucinate it. Eye
Contact through the window

Is love, do we all agree? A drop of it, at least?
We didn't even want to kill each other. She
Doesn't even need Instagram or poetry—I
Know it. I saw it inside. Who bought me this filter

This time? O it was you: the present moment
Isn't supposed to sound like this, Ash! It is not
Really anything, all of the time—only it cannot
Sound like me. Your strokes, eh! You know. Everyone

Is beautiful from here. Literally. It isn't overwhelming.
And it doesn't mean you need to help them all!
This was literally somebody for eight minutes.
If a tree scrolls in a forest: O fringing hell.

Further Acceptance

The perfect sandwich, there is—
For all this lust and spirituality; for all this
Narrative to curtail lust
Or monopolise lust: depends on indigestion

Or the feeding time of the young
Seeker of a publisher—the deliberations
On how to fill these meals, eh—enough
To entertain an analyst: the analyst

Once sought a publisher. Will again; I don't
Want lunch or all this scripture. Theory then! To
Understand is to taste the same, find
It funny and still want the good

Spread: a dart at a map; bingo surprise
Meat; bingo surprise thigh. Serrated blades
Above the crust you make something up
On and remember: further acceptance.

Enormous Work

More sickness. You aren't looking at the completely bad thing,
Never did. Some gunk that must be! You're right
Hums and tingles confused at the blur
Of meaning the medicine makes from the shelves
Of the library, their pulleys up out of the rings, past
That teenage dream you had, visible, but broken,

Grinning. And you grin too—a few days of this and
Who knows what you can tie up too
To the bar, hand down, hang down? You will never

Hang up and only'll dream of it now! O she looked smooth
What of it: analytic appreciation from here on in. You were
Getting a lift fixed in the library—yes: just a few more days

Of this and who knows what you'll tie yourself to—yes; which
String did you drop? The lyre musicality, definitely.

Always

O the phenomena shooting
Through or off you dragging
Or firing fault and standing beside it.
Poeting beside it like Dante: I'm here
Disciple. Wait—I said "disciple": the dangers
Spraying away from the yoga mat
Reverse, reassemble, reattach as fresh
Metaphysic: what is the stretch for "metaphysic"?—

Painting. Learning your scales, another
Dante mastered diatonic and that: I'm here…
Leading by example. Only you better master them; I
Better rehearse: it's best to have the muscle memory
Over the top the only reason you're bothered
By "them". At least you're reading 'um above! Didn't
Say understanding, did he? You'd meant
"Learn" but… There's always someone else doing it.

Messages the Seahorses Suck

A depression, a family
Heirloom, un-got-rid-of: O me, my
Sounds—avant-garde. Dangerous.
But to quatrain for this

Army I carry
Into new verse of the Somme! The liers
In the sun—in that sand! beached;
Not peaches—that seem OK: I hope they aren't.

Massive headache. Millennia old
Itch behind pupils, blackens the view,
Keeps me in… scratching.
How my parents were made to scratch. How

Together we would itch and
Scratch the shore blind: inside, instead I
Stay behind bottling
Messages the seahorses suck.

No Fighting

I think I'll be on one tonight: my hips
Don't lie. And I'm starting to feel you, boy,

Waving again to the surface
Through too much synchronicity, believing

You're all sorts: a refugee
In your own skin. A global superstar of
Poetry: yoga's
A cunt if you rush

What you are bending: they don't lie, as such,
But they can stretch the truth—like a zombie
Half-faced in a noose. Or the tooth
Fairy. Clip the wings away? OK: let's

Go—real slow. Don't you see, baby? Perfecto!
O man: it's fine. You aren't the first to fly! Then cry.

A Few Different People

I have sexual intercourse with
Everyone on the bus and some consent.
I pray for everyone on the bus
And slightly improve their lives. I am full
Of heinous thoughts. They are bad and you are not.
I am strong. Brave.

I blow up the bus.
I think about someone else's difficulty for four minutes
Without even trying. It forces itself upon me.
I mean, I chose it. Some of us are just nice people.
I would leave that child for dead. Would this…
Would this work, over like

This? Let me be well; let the others enrich like
This. I was born deserving praise & not needing.

Pizza Tonight

Ashley Dunn woke up fresh and was Arnold
Schoenberg: "Ahhhh fuck. Ahhhh bloody hell. O now
What. What the fuck am I gonna write here what the
Fuck can I atone now?" he said.

Yeah I'm Kafka. Don't know. Cockroaches and that.
Maladaptions yeah. Yeah transcending
Practice. I dunno mate.
Dunno mate.

"Good morning. Can I speak to Ashley Dunn pl-"
No need! I'm at work!
Yeah I'm sound, why—what's up?
You ain't taking anything from that, are you,

Surely? Do I feel better?

Hmmm. Pizza tonight, I reckon.

Ambiguate

Turner to Deleuze in 10 years; and you ambiguate.
Whereof… but you know. Looking
Is no longer character or sin.
You drop reincarnations regularly

Without a label: O labelless
Followers. Invisibles! Observed effects! Not
Yet—yes. Closed experiences
Experienced and… “enjoyed”: it’s so difficult 😜

The Poetry Foundation Website Wants to Verify You Are Human

I’ve just signed off a £600 taxi—I haven’t.
I’m having sex. I’m at the bar. I’m prescribing
Very low level amphetamines to migrants.
I’m wasting poems

That at least jangle. I’m doing a quiz. I’m
Picketing outside a hotel. Everything
Else I am doing except for that. I’m secondhand
Smoking. Fruit Pastilles. I heal

And reveal—an appealing phrase
Days later: I am putting something together.
I am an amalgamation of whatever is happening
In our era, crammed, curtailed to six

Stanzas: study me. Uber me Bolt me
To the Office of National Statistics; I mean the
Sociology department. Self the voice and voice
The self the poem—the going

Gone of the century. Annuls of strive,
Impeach? I am of the tool and do not phase
The history of such synapsed breaks. Recover
And never divulge that there is

Time for you to escape what must be those glances,
Glue, attachment of such dirty states.
There once was and there is now is not.
A patchwork walks.

Hover On

I drift, float, fly, decide,
Change, liminal disgust
Myself, lie, jitter around London
Pret to Pret, Ash to Ash,
Dust to dust. When will the yada

Yada be enough—to rhyme.
I literally have so many coats I do not wear.
The amount of cycling I do means I hardly
Need to wear one for very long anyway: I research

Rentals in Dubai
For more—and alliteration as well. I am under
A spell of spelling a voice that
Isn't mine and The Shard, the
View from The Shard; I… hover on.

Yadagate

I'm at the UN: "O no—not again:
He's on the BBC!" I'm on a Flix
Bus, London to Bristol, about
To make a fuss over someone
Playing music. I'm not. I'm
The plane in the sky. I'm a cloud.
I'm an episode. I'm a series of
Catastrophic poems I haven't posted yet.
I am the resentment
You have for your partner
Because you were going to do it next year. I

Mean I'm at the UN: "You've
Let them all in—the
Line breaks are open! It is the absolute opposite of
Sharia law in the poems." I'm
The plane in the sky: I've looked
Again. I mean I am the sun going down: I am you
Pretending
To experience sunsets. I am squiggly black marks on a
Piece of tree: why does it feel
Like it does? Why didn't I book a seat?
This is making me feel less nauseous.

"You have to be more cautious
With your borders. My wife is literally a Taurus! I am
Full of bull. She has been full of bull." The plane,
The clouds, the sky are full of
Light, fluxing. The music may be shite but it also
Isn't real: "She
Believes I am not real. You can disbelieve me too!" It's
A way to get through
The poetry, without feeling like you could cause
A catastrophe: apostrophe—to
Omit or possess. "Yada elevator into a cloud."

I Literally Live In a Primary School

I move in with 37 people, and all of them

Hate me, poetically: I need
To go in the kitchen. I need to cook the books. I need
A third “need”: it’s how

This works. It is how I work. It’s how
The poem’s berserk. No it’s not.
“Wallace Stevens was a wealthy insurance executive
And one of America’s greatest poets,” someone

That looks just like me, mouths
Over the industrial worktop
That is used to chop onions: it becomes a poem. No I
Write them into my phone. But it’s just easier? I

Don’t give a fuck what you think about me—would you
Like to use my fridge, my tender, visceral,
Fierce new friend? I’m playing with a sort of
Character—and they still need to clarify

That he lives in a property guardianship. The books
Aren’t quite cooked, no. I’ve a pamphlet though! It’s
Horrific. You like it? Then I think it is absolutely
Incredible and you are incredibly brave. It’s just

Something in my eye. FUCK I mean… there’s layers?
Just IT, mate. Yeah just in IT, mate—you? Cool! Too
Many chefs haha yeah. Fucking creatives! I love them.
~~I live~~ I’ve lived with millions. No I don’t have Instagram.

In the “Immediacy”

There is something in the “immediacy”
That I do not care to think about.
Though watch how I organise my shelves.
I stay here in the house, saying how the house
Is broken and defunct pretending I am someone

Else: I pick the plaster; while she’s in
The shower. I recall my days of decorating—“The
Wallpaper gives me an immediate sense”: contrives
Sense. These houses do—and should—have fences;
And I cannot believe the owners

Decide to be owners and rest on the benches
Here. I used to eliminate fear here before realising
Appearances can be insincere: my lines
Of books cannot even contain the kitchen sink,
Nor do they help one think. And so I think
Only of the pink and stink imminently returning.

No Need to Be Sayable

Your life cannot but move into the future

If you change the route and move your furniture.
As you do the past will glow
And you will be reaping what you may have wanted
To sow but as you sit in the rickety carriage facing
Backward the track will be being reupholstered
From before and it'll soon feel like nothing ever blew.

Are you thinking so much about what to do? You
Do something to ignore the blue and more
Clues do appear glue-like—stuck forever;
Rhyming. But these may only be temporary
To get you away from histories that are horrible
So as to make life more tolerable eventually. Sitting
Still is an option but that will keep you in the chill

And it isn't very honourable. You will be on the edge
Of the town of your new life and the knives
Of all the coulda-been-wives will strive to make
Hell in your cells for one last time: you know
From poetry that that is fake—that you can face
The right way into the new play that you have made
Hospitable away from the now no need to be sayable.

Settling Another One

I heal and peel
Away pages that are better than this
To other broken thesauruses.
I settle a quatrain

And get more sane quitting
Pain and the pettiness of stain
Ownership and being famous
For, "Look what they did!" I

Continue the poem
Days later, differently: that must have been a-
Nother me. I am
Consciousness stanzaed! I need not do

Anymore
Stitching with verse
Pretending it is for you.
I am guessing I need to settle another one here too.

Great Reckoning

I'm in Shakespeare's Head: can't
Yada yada in here, can I! Last
Night? I watched him
With Christopher Marlowe—there are
Rumours they could be the same person? You
Should have seen how they were flirting

With breaking the conventions of their time. “Only
Breaking? They certainly crossed the line!” I’m
Guessing these stanzas will now be made up

Of nine. “When a man's verses
Cannot be understood, nor a man's
Good wit seconded with the forward child,
Understanding, it strikes a man
More dead than a great reckoning in a little room”: *As
You Like It*—the jester’s words saying Shakespeare’s
Tribute to Kit. Though this was after he’d put out a hit
On him, allegedly—so it counts for little. Or was it
Sir Walter Raleigh? I am going to make it three

Of these. That’ll stop the church killing me—
Poetry! Pretending he wasn’t a catholic stopped
Billy being tortured. This tavern has a bust that cannot
Even be authenticated: no one knows
Their faces! I reckon they hid behind their verses
Because they were perverse. Or extremely boring. Or
Synonymously neurotic. Another faux-bard
In here won’t shut the fuck up: he’s outlined his entire
Trip! It literally isn’t me: “Mine?! It’s theirs behind he.”

Poetry of an Exhibitionist

Filter coffee. At 9 o’clock
At night?! I do not give a fuck: I’m photographing
The Proms with my flash on: I’m dragged
Out into Kensington
Gardens and thrown in the Round Pond: “Sound,
Mate!” I say. “I didn’t want to see what else
Bruce had to play anyway!” They leave. I recross

Kensington Gore and am nearly gored
By a black cab—because I’ll need to link back
To that later: I sneak back into the Hall
Without fuss. And after the interval? There’s no
Bruce! He’s earned his fee playing only about
Four notes! Instead? Modest(!) Mussorgsky’s
Pictures at an Exhibition—the Philharmonia Orchestra

Conducted by some Finnish: do you know
What for? The pun for the ending… I’m floating
To the ceiling first: the 8th movement—*Cum mortuis
In lingua mortua*: I’m talking
An unknown language to ya. Dead!—it’s
Killing all the poetry in my head: breaking into
Taxis (see!) at 14 years of age to afford a bag?! The shame

Negated by a cymbal—memory’s fickle: he’s
Got the easiest job in the world, banging
Symbols. I bet he does it without thinking—the

Conductor doesn't even look at him! Bruce
Wasn't scratting around for pounds
As a teen, was he: let's be honest—trying
To score? He was learning scores instead! Boring. We

Are getting to the final movement, and I'm
Having a moment. A line break! A bogus gate before
The Bogatyr Gates: I capitulate. The Nordic's
Got me in a state, edging us through the final stages
Of these teenage phases—maybe: I'm
Sobbing in the second tier! I'm changing gears—out
The cheap seats! "Ash: no one cares." What fin

Rarely Performed Second Piano Concerto

I'm at the Proms—I am: what I have
Become—a BBC prop. A puppet with a near
Rhyme I fear writing here: a bomb's
Up my top—better that than saying

Absolutely anything wrong. I'll incite
Violence in stanzas instead: this poem's
A disaster faster than I could have imagined: not
Really. Faster than me?! Really: I need a new voice.

I need a trombone! I am going to sound like a wanker
Even more so if this show doesn't blow one: I am
Seeing a keyed concerto, literally. You too! I sound
Like the word I did not want to mention: look—it was

A joke: there's nowt in my clothes. Not even me! You
Like knowing there's holes in the poems, as many
As it takes to fill the Royal Albert Hall: Beatles—I am
Literally in a fork-like sprawl, a week before, sprawling

This song—in Bristol. Hehe—no!: I'm not concealing
A pistol! I sound like this cuz classical music ain't
Accessible, actual- literally. Nor do I pay my license
Fee. Or have a ticket! The orchestra sound absolutely

Fantastic, I mean: please continue taking my money
To conduct the required arts to advance humanity,
Which may subconsciously filter into mongs like me
To change our belligerency eventua- Fuck.

Rarely Performed Second Piano Concerto: Encore

I'm at the Proms—I am: what I have
Become—a BBC prop. A puppet with a near
Poem, I've redone, without
Sounding like a plum in this one (not): Bruce

Liu—bliss: a few Tchaikovsky pieces! Erm I'm

Not really sure how you say it: he changed his
First name, at least! O—you meant
Ilyich's? Awkward. "Tchaikovsky"—try it: I'm obviously

Still moody. This poem might not be any better! When
Is that triangle player going to play 'Wonderwall'? I
Wonder how many holes they'd fit into this hall—what
Do you mean? I did?! He jokes—I know: I wrote it. He's

Trying. He really is! Maybe the piano isn't literally his?
I bet he's practising. I bet he's doing it to take the
Yep: he's having it. Stealing the poem! Pyotr—rewrite
The overture: they've taken Moscow! There's only

Two more stanzas to go: how am I to stem the flow
Of literally what I am? Because I am a product of my
Poem, just trying to be a better man. Poetically! Like
You: pretending. But he doesn't give a fuck—literally:

Bruce—you were ace. And you do look like Lee! It is
Literally something he said himself, you stone fruit
Like me. Being caught even dead listening to *(What's The Story) Morning Glory?*? I even did this one poorly :(

By This Moved Time Think I'd Already

I am moving to London. "They came out to you,
And you started looking at them differently
And treating them coldly, they said," my girlfriend's
Boss said to her: an accusation from a colleague.
She quit. She told me about in her flat
She shares with her lesbian friend. My girlfriend
Is a Romanian Dream. I tell her over and over again
That she is only a Romanian Dream. I'll be
Working from home. My name is pronounced
"Ashley". Sack me. "Is it a duck or

A rabbit?" the caveman says to the artist
In the cave, 15,000 years ago: I am writing
Multiple poems. "Whatever sells for more." I wear
Her earrings. I wear her underwear. It keeps it all
At home. Sometimes he seems to put it here. She
Has a new job: picking and packing. She gets a grip
On multiple items, fills a pallet, and wraps it up
Evenly-ish and sends it out into the world. Her name
Is pronounced "Romanian Dream" but she calls me
Different things when I wear her underwear: she looks

At the floor now at work. I stare at a screen and
Manufacture my palette: I have multiple palettes—it
Depends on the accusation: "It looks like an elephant."
"You are picking multiple paleti." "Me face Romanian
Dream me cannot no face." She doesn't talk like this.

The lesbian doesn't talk to me! It's unrelated. She is
Only a lesbian. Yeah she has a name, why? O. She
Wears my earrings. She's London to moving—nothing
A pallet makes: "An elephant?! They never forget! I'll
Pay you absolutely nothing per hour, on a zero hour

Contract and you'll not have to face the world!" She
Better change her face and look at the floor, literally:
The non-dreams want to eat her. No—at her new job:
It is on the edge of the cave: you do not need to
Blink about it. "Good boy, Ashl- Susan!" What? When?
No I didn't: I was thinking about London—I was
Thinking about the lesbian refusing to talk to me!
Well I can't use her real name in a poem—she won't
Look at—can I: I am going to report her to my boss. O.
My landlord then? "Not my pallet." Maybe I will just

Deal with it until we can both discuss it. Maybe I will
Use it in the bedroom! "Use it up in the bedroom? A
Rabbit in the bedroom? How about you turn it this way
A little bit. A bit more. A bit… there! O yeah! It feels
Like a poem!" Peckham. Yeah. Yeah I call her
Romanian Dream. Because what the duck has it got
Literally. Not Peckham, literally. Only fools and
Foals. Because I want to be faceless in the crowd.
Because you don't pack quick enough—sorry! Maybe
She's in love with me? "Priceless!" We pick the poetry.

The Inconsequential Conscious of the Inconsequentialness

O to be free of submission
Windows now that I only exist avatarially. To be your
Reason! Excuse! Shadow!
To be everything I want to be
And so then being it cowardly because I
Need to be it somewhere: it may only

Be "want". To light the ever darkening darkness
Cast by the nonsense
To occupy the very casters. To forget, as
Often happens, what I drafted in the shower
For the shower! For the drain and droplets
Dripping into the shower's drain! To play

With the inconsequential conscious of the
Inconsequentialness of it, to wondering if the poster
Will post it—the poster of the "I"
Anxious, always: no! To only pen one side
Of the self! To promote fake yous!: O
A sheep pun! They are so beneath I

Like a final stanza, looking, acupuncturing
Desperate for flourish: it isn't coming—it

Doesn't need to. It's Instagram!
It is about as important as poetry is! The tears
Too fall into the drain to create an
End that doesn't tie up so you can further admonish.

I Can't Call It That

"…you, still children
Who are not yet cured
Of being cured"
—Ricardo Reis, 'The Ancient Rhythm'

Different delinquents come to the poems: the poet
Writes them like a voodoo man—the
Reader thinks it's them: it is, if

They are switched on. They aren't. It's why the poet
Voodoos. It is why they have to voodoo and you
Do "Ooo" and "Ahh" at the readings, pretending—

Weirdos: it is a ghost… in prose! Typed-out clothes!
They want to say hello so they can finally snooze
And be forgiven: the river drivels on catching drips

Tying themselves onto drips, whether they like
Drivel or not: they lose their little spots of shame—
They would not otherwise change: Poet

Voodoo weirdo sounds insane. The weirdos feel less
Pain and "Eh?!" and more of the same goes away.

Bets Hedged

Faber and Faber in 10 years: "Ash, we
Were going to give you a contract, but
You posted that bad taste poem a
Decade ago: we'll have to let you
Go. We'll have to throw you out. We'll
Also probably pretend that you
Behaved like an absolute weapon, in this meeting
This morning, to literally please
Absolute weapons: it's where we are at—you'll
Starve to death now, I'm afraid! Though it's a shame

For us too: your groundbreaking, astute,
Bulletproof stanzas would have ended
Literature! Literally closed the chapter, on feigned
Happy ever afters: no more auto-written
Schizophrenic healing answering to themselves
Themselves. Please sign this NDA, now: it says
We said nothing about the literature
Game being mostly a talking to oneself: we
Have shareholders that literally need your shelves

Full of themselves. Thanks. You can show yourself out

Of the poem!" Fascinating. I didn't even
Know where he was going! Will I have
An agent? Does literature literally need saving
From… whatever he was saying to himself
Himself, presumably! If I'd have put "8 years" it'd then be
2033: I'd rhyme! I might get more time in the meeting!
What the literally fuck will I be eating by then: if it's
Anything that still makes me bleat on like I do now I
Might be fine. What'd you rather—"yada yada" or "one
More line"? "Ermmm—*this* one!": sorry—I got it wrong.

Literally New Window Pane

I'm at the Wyndham—*Born*
With Teeth: tonight's entertainment. Can relate.
I'm moving to Ladbroke Grove—it's
Insane: "a playful
And daring imagining of their relationship
During an extraordinarily dangerous time
For artists"—are
They talking about me

And my pen? I'm in a box, looking
Down on the stage. Fuck! I mean, I'm on the ceiling
Feigning, again, forgetting I'm
The plainest, most basic of men, foregoing
The lie, that I am a pain: it is
Pain, really, reader: you are seeing through a window
Pane, finally, literally. But he doesn't know
What he's saying: the director

Is playing it out
Cowardly: what the fuck you going on about, Ash—
Moving?! When did this happen—what
Are you even actually literally doing? Sitting
Between floor and
Ceiling, achieving some balance—with still some
Reliance on rhythm to keep myself
Away from him. Who is this "him": he

Gets the pen, sometimes. To be honest I'm
Finding out this new way of framing
Me, myself, at the same time as you are! Speech
Marks would help, dur. No—not
Anymore, sir: we are back together—not
Out of our box! I mean, he's in a box! I mean he is and
He's not? I mean it doesn't fucking matter: the show
Starts in minutes. But I don't know how to write it?

Ring des Nibelungen des Pauvres

Bruce Liu has an album called *WAVES*: can't relate—
Satie covers! It's absolutely fantastic. Erik's
Mates called him "Mr Poor", and he carried
A hammer. Oddball! Guess who's on the M4

National Expressing, traversing new understandings
Of tonality, space and emotion in poetic composition
Paraphrasing someone else's documentation
From Soundfly. "What's Soundfly?" I don't know: I'm

Up in the sky! I'm on a packed coach listening to 'Ice
Ice Baby' being played: it is by an artist Satie paved
The way for, in his way—O well: not everything can be
Great. "Could you turn it off?"—I will not say

To them, because they seem devoid of formalism, the
Demented renegades: they are making me vexed.
Vexations! Erik has already captured it! I should make
Them listen to it 840 times: John Cage did—another

Lunatic. "Poetry rhymes. "Poetry rhymes"?! ""Poetry
Rhymes"?!""—a non-resolving tritone harmony, to try
Send them into the sky. With me! I still have over 90
Minutes to go. I sat on the left hand side so I stayed

Cool: I am now a tad cold. Vanilla's Iced! They've now
Spliced their noise with Massive Attack. Better! Even
More so with my hammer action keyboard honing in
On them: 839. 840! 841?! Hang on—it's unending!

Driver! Halt!

I am viewing rooms in London. The Romanian
Dream is with me. Who is she? What is
Happening? I forgot
Where I was going in life

In the first line: "Driver! Halt! This
Is our stop—London Victoria. Do you
Want me to send this poem to ya: you're
In it. Because I had no idea what

Else to put!": it's drying
Up—the poetic fountain: I am disembarking
The bus and writing a fantasy—it writes
Itself differently to what I had planned: "Can

You continue this elsewhere, my man?" I'm
Spamming from halfway inside of a coach: the traffic
Is blocking up the road! It weaves
Around my brain like a tube map: "Zone 1, 2, 3,

Twilight! You are the highlight of my life, babe! You're
Safe with-" She panics—leaves: the dream. She runs
Away from me and jumps into the Thames—I am on
A wave inside whatever he says, purely to finish

Six stanzas: it is tiring, dreadful work. "But
Someone has to do it, passengers!" I am on the M4,
Dribbling. I literally drivel on the dream's sofa: she
Watches from the shore. On the bus I will

Snore and make a seventh: living with me? Heaven!
Even if it is only poetically. We need to catch the
National Express at 5:40 in the morning: "Your poetry
Is boring." It's early! And at least I am not literally

Driving me into the eighth bay of a coach station.
It is fitting that I only have two more lines to mention
The nothing that I have said in this poem: it is always
Snowing. "But it will snow less in London, darling."

Malus ("2nd one I've liked in a while🤣")

I'm at Grow Wilder. "Grow Wilder?! Ash—
You can't!" I can: my friend mocks
My stanzas: "I only really like that
One poem." If she carries on I'll kill her
Sunflowers. "Cock!" "Get lost," I say—and devour

A golden noble apple, in this
Frenchay maze: I'm lost! I was meant to go
To Fishponds! I am in the swamp
Of poetry—in a haze, as usual. I tell you
Everything, because Grow Wilder is literally

Communal—a peaceful hub
Off the M32, I'm told: Google. Golden noble—
Can't relate: I am literally getting lost
Of friends, if I carry on
Poetically, at this rate: "Can I buy this

Tote bag, mate—for my mate? £8,000?!"
I didn't want to buy a bag anyway—that's another
Me: she will have to do without. I navigate
Out of the place using the Latin names: I don't
Make sense—you can tell I have been to sleep, since

The previous stanza break: genus—species—
"Hac via": this way. Thank god for that: I've made it.
And I nearly bought a bouquet of courgettes! She
Gives me a lift, literally—metaphorically. I consider
Not being a dick—pulling weeds: "malus"—it isn't me.

Snack

"That's better—some good
Cock: thank you
Jesus Christ, for men." She is
Insane: surely she doesn't mean
All men? She just means me. She just

Means my penis—not
My personality: I could tell
By how she stared at the door, to subtly
Make me leave her house
Post-coitus. I literally wanted to go anyway, to get

To Pret: I am a nervous
Wreck: used
Again. It is because my poetic
Diction embodies all men: I do not even
Make sense. It does not matter when

Your pen sends women to space: "Come
Down! I need you to let me out!" I say. By the time
She lands she hates me
Again. She literally adores me, really. She loves
Being a part of my poetry—and me

Hers: " I want to put you in
My purse!" she exclaims. Absurd. I explain
How rhyming works—by designing
Stanzas she shouts
Literally only poetically. "Are you

Literally making me up?" she asks: fuck—"Yep." "Step
Back in then: forget Pret!" We lay on the bed and
Laugh at the poem I am making up
Instead, in my head—because she has gone: I am left
Bereft—done. She is full from literally Jesus's wand.

"The Warehouses Would Be Empty"

Putin rings me. "Ash. Ash!—we
Know your girlfriend is Moldovan: sway
Her vote. Tell her what to say
In the poem. Decimate the EU. Drone
Us back into the USSR." OK, Vlad. But she's

The Romanian Dream! The Romanian, Eastern
European Dream… of being free! And her mother
Is literally from Iasi. "Ashley. Ash! I need to send this
Voting slip back, immediately. What should I put?
I need your input because you are from exquisite

British stock," she says. "Anglo Saxon genes: they

Make me weak at the knees!" "Tick
The box that makes us the most money," Daddy
Decides. "The Pro-Kremlin one which offers stacks of
Cryptocurrency stock in Gazprom and Estonian

Airspace but not really—god!": I send her
The drafts of my daft as she picks and she packs: she
Laughs as I drag her out of her Moldavian past—she
Needs my Western knack of improving everything: me
Moscow and Brussels literally want to control the

Kitchen sink: who knows where she could've been
Without me. Probably not spied on with a digital ID!
Probably not losing her indefinite leave to remain
Eventually. Inevitably. Probably calling someone else
Daddy until another leader does it better and we call

Them that too because mummy wouldn't do, would it:
"We have grown out of that, Dream. Because we have
OK?! Do as I say!" me, Moscow and Brussels say. We
Will waste the brown envelope droned over to us in
The cloud on clouds of poetry as the snow descends.

Represtanzable

Everybody is a psycho-
Analyst so you might as well
Say and do it anyway: seventeen
Characters a day keeps the doctor
On my voicemail, saying, "Ash! Ash! For god's
Sake: eat an apple!" Utter shambles. I amble along

In song writing everything wrong, according
To the reader's DSM. Or autism. Only I haven't
Reported to them, the people in the long
White coats for an assessment, as it may
Just have been the family friends, our parents
Invited around, that are to blame. Not that I am

Making them responsible! I am making me
Represtanzable instead, chatting
Literally a load of bull: I am not even understandable
To me! They get me off the settee though, these
Flows of projection and know-it-all: it is a close call
Which is which: it literally is how you are reading it—

Stop. Please stop reading them, the poet-
Nostics. The "That means this!" nonsense: quit
Taking them to bed, and waking up
In them. Waiting for an appointment—to have what
Pointed out, exactly: that it isn't poetry? "It is literally
A personality disorder, ~~Ash~~ me." O here we go.

Makes My Shopping Easier

I need not convince myself this bliss is happening.
Yes rivers be deep too. You read anything about
Them ocean… Fair.
I didn't say anything: people can just cough,

You know—and I know what every nuance
Of them means. I don't. I dunno it's
Just the urge to remove waste—what of it?
I didn't want to bathe in it

Anymore whilst pretending I was in some sacrificial
Shower for the gods: the advert says
"Voluntary chef wanted—ingredients supplied." What
Exactly was it you were expecting? You're

Making the others want it! Makes my shopping easier!
I cook for myself. I didn't call them oceans. I'm
Pushing it now but I can really taste the things
I do not feel the need to cook for me in front of you.

After Fred Seidel

I am not debonair, unlike
Fred. I don't care.
I will be debonair here instead
But not 'ere. I hardly care what I said.
I don't care what they did

To the writer because I only say they didn't: I am
Between movements, like
A human. The poem is static. It is
Whatever personality you give it.
If it is nasty it is what they did.

I am dressed up debonairly
Going to something grand
That I cannot be bothered to mention.
Having an extension is a sign of nothing
Unless the non-debonair me has a problem with that.

It's a disorder? OK.
It is literally what I am trying to do. Why
That? Selfish reasons. Working
Something out psychically so I do not have to return. I
Return and blur and become

About as lucid as you. You do not care to be
Debonair but god forbid someone find you
Ridiculous or not you
When you are not being you
Poetically because of similar carelessness early on.

Sick of Saving Posh People and Looking Like a Twat for It

Released on the gears, pig tales,
Gathering up the gak from the cream.
“S’like that one, but crasser.” A bit more
Goes over. God he’s on his own;

How to join the thing. Freeing oneself
All the time very realistically. “Need I
Say more?” Apparently.
The bottom

Fall away as the critics
Tick a few boxes, their feeders
Humbly growing maniacs. I feel like I am experiencing

It, and giving you
An embarrassing glimpse of what cycles
Back into my own psychopathology.

Soul Mate, Your Lips

Looking at pasts that never exist
On USB sticks, a dick pic
From six different angles every seventeenth slide, I
Find you embarrassingly still
Out of my league, knowing half, three-quarters?
All? of the angles went to you: I assume you
Nodded and lied back—the soul mate, your lips
Perfect in my shadow controlling the lens, some

Blurred, some of them passing the online dating
Censor, just: I saw you there recently, half, one-
Quarter… a flicker of a self like the twenty-
Somethings here, looking so much in love
From here… no!—between attempts to make that dick
3D: I cannot feel her, or him. The stories go—you
Frozen like a picture, there. And then we learn they
Break the cold and bring the snow but don’t much go.

[Insert Title Here]

“To be a poet is no ambition of mine.
It is my way of staying alone.”
—Alberto Caiero, The Keeper of Sheep

Ash only wants love if it’s torture. Love
Only wants Ash because he’s torture. Torture
Only wants love if it’s Ash. Poetry is torture unless
Ash is in you, with love: stop if I’m going too
Stanza—if I stop making things up—if I find the point
I was planning to write about on the bus: Taylor

Does not ride the bus anymore, for sure, but does
Drag us along with her songs devoid of anything
Other than fluff: it worked! She got a footballer! She is
Enough. I sit in the back with the other kids from
My brain that find it tough and I make stuff
Extremely boring for ourselves aside from the pen.

And then we write poems: they want to fib around
In the poems and I let them and then I post them
On Instagram because I am the driver. I then sleep
With a quarterback. I don't. I don't know what he is.
"Rough": missed out above. The little fucks don't give.
If only I was as brave as them—as a fiction—as an ex-

Tension into another yada: I lie and stare at the screen
In bed: "How can I manipulate them? This is artistry!"
What the fuck do my traumatised inner children have
To do with Swifties? The reader'll decide: it is literally
Something—one of the first four lines: I am going to
Line a load of shite until I do not have to ride the bed.

Too Many Tabs

I play with my id.
That's not what I said.
Why don't you fuck off, yeah? I
Repeat my themes

And copy my favourites: I am
Outrageous—rhyme. Sex
All of the time. Climbing back
Inside of my mother: O bother. O

Poetry. Which of one of it of me
Be it now? Raducanu
Retires ill. AI will
Hallucinate—they will make up things which

Don't actually exist: I consist
Of multiple screens—I
Look from the desk
Through the screen door: should I feel like this?

Write me a poem in the style of me, Ash. OK.
Blimey. Blimey? Yeah blimey it's
Not what I expected: no wonder she told me to
Fuck off. It makes me feel dizzy. Why

Are we alone? No one else has problems like me.
The technology doesn't seem to have damaged
Their selves. I can't stop looking! No WHAT not
At that—you mad? It's a compulsion.

You Can See My Problems Remain

Sorry this one is even deeper and you need to pretend
More. You there? Phew! I was concerned
Not really, but just a little further joke
You wouldn't get it, you know,
Like the others? You're occupied! It's the main thing.
And the… what're we looking at? Do
Let me kno- Right—weird, isn't it, you

Only know when… I… ask…?
I can't believe I got that in: seems
I can keep you quiet how I like. I'll continue, thanks.
And where the others do not get to travel (that part
Is you) and how they do not get to see (shared) the
Way they had it wrong,
Because they were just, what, a tad…
Overtaken by it still (that part

Can be me I just need to word it more…
Courageously yes—important!).
You can see my problems remain.

Intentional or Unintentional Meaning or Feeling

"The poem is you."
—John Ashbery, 'Paradoxes and Oxymorons'

Hi yeah I can see he is trying to express something
In some real, though tremendously odd way
(Would I ever talk like this?); but *she*
Posted any old crap, you know? So I had to like that.

But do read about my semiotics! O I don't
Explain them: they've already been written
(Wrote? FUCK I really knew that once!) down
In my thesis. Yeah I'm nearly there. My eighth year!

Surely he can't have many friends either? Tremendously
Odd yeah OK I said that already; semi…?

Fine that too. They are signs
Defined as anything that communicate intentional or unintentional meaning or feeling to the sign's
Interpreter. Straight from Wikipedia: indeed!

Look I liked it can't you just sleep with me?

I Am Being a Moment

I am going to be dying for the next forty, fifty
Years, I reckon. God I'm nauseating—not me
Yada yada. Can feel it though. Don't care. Feels

Good and steady. Healthy. The tricking

Rhythm of language does something conclusive
Or unsettling. How could any one single thing
Make one experience anything better: “any one”
Like that was another trick—it’s scary

Conceptually to be apart from you like this: such
A tantalising second-person pronoun. I’m running
Amok. I am being a moment—though of course
I’m not: I am squeezing out an exercise—that’s

The feeling today: more lies—it isn’t even a feeling.
And I look down because it’s someone he knows.
And the weight is folded into a locket, we question
Because we don’t know the poem’s a locket… now.

Sometimes Feels No Different

Why does he run in that ludicrous way? It’s far too long, that stride, surely. Looks
uncomfortable. It so obviously hurts me. What’s the point? The extremities of his
body are disg-

O and here we go now too: the future! Why can’t I walk around with my nipples on sh-

I moved here
And started doing interviews
Not long afterwards
In local magazines. It felt like

I’d finally created my place. Found my people.
O no—they’re so lovely. I don’t want to bother them
With this; and it isn’t their fault:

The words have just dried up. Maybe I shouldn’t complain;
There really are runners everywhere in this city, aren’t there. Maybe I still am fairly new.
And to complain would be giving them what they want: I won’t

Do that anymore, Jane! It’s like I *finally*
Build up the courage to say something
And then I’m left picking up the pieces. And it’s all on record!
And no one told me about the huge gap

We were having to contend with—the work
Our work needed to do. No I wouldn’t feel comfortable *at all*
Making use of *the* luxury quote. That’s crossing a line. It wouldn’t be right. *Feel* right at *all*,
no. Another one running absolutely *grotesquely*. Why even bother? This city
Sometimes feels no different

To my home town, crawling with backwards hic-
No you’re right; and that’s why
It really is essential

That we get this poetry business *right*! Else we'll be on our own
Out here. Terrifying! O Jane when *will* they catch up?
If I can adjust

Anyone can! But it needs to be such a deep change.
I… I'm encouraging
Of you now, aren't I? Sorry I'm just doubting myself. I know I know: *they*
Asked *me*! They obviously saw something I don't see in myself, at least
Right now. Potential maybe?

She looks absolutely fantastic though, doesn't she.
Ah, now Jane: he's *trying*, remember? "Like
Two left feet": you're terrible!
Omg! I think I've got…

Ooo. Ooo this'd be good. Though it would take
Some wor- It's gone. Nah it's gone—forget it.

<u>So They Can Just Be Slips</u>

Why doesn't every town have one of me, slowly
Changing the scene? It feels
Cringe to begin with, but do it a few times
And you'll realise you were born to do it. It's been there all along.
O I was training. But letting Freud take my spoonerisms? Pah;
Give over. I start each morning
With exercises to attune me to the gift inside,
Not that it's anything I can claim. As in, I don't think it makes me
Who I am. But then I don't think
Everyone can do this. I used to think
They could, then I realised that they couldn't. They
Can pretend to: sure. O sure—I see plenty of that.
I've never really had to do that though; I can see
Why I grew so rapidly
In my town. I'd say more! Only it wouldn't feel right.
The training just takes all the joy out of life. The unknown.
We can only see so far
Into it—I can attest to this; but it doesn't mean
We should eliminate the oath. Hmm—I like that:
So they can just be slips. What he doesn't tell us…
These are the kinds of prompts
You could try with? You'll wrestle it. You'll upset the town.
Then something will open
Pouring forth the energy which could take your people
Elsewhere, even if just for seconds. If I help
One of you like this? You can only imagine.

<u>All Those Tab Groups Too. So Unnecessary</u>

You were only just unsubscribing from mailing lists—
Now you feel how terrible of an opening line that is;
And you've no "friends" as they once were: "acquaintances"
At best which feels so good. In Westminster Abbey

Or on a plinth the universe recycles, you allow it to take you
Back through all the “memories” only not
To be duped. You want to come in on the action,
The pen is royal blue and you… win?!

I think I am winning and O shoot: you find your repartees
Inside jokes. When did we start talking to ourselves?
If you’d have only left early with that opt-out

Energy you could have had more than models
Linguistically; but then more charges. It’s a shame
You’re “here” in between and justifiably indifferent at this stage, you hope.

Modified Morning Routine

New bends: to flush out locked-in static
Of memories—and so inclined—so phallic; now
They’re worked through the throat
Which serves as a moat,

As always, until the drawbridge
Falls, history calls and the ridge
Isn’t so far away, yet widened—a place
For you alone to confide in; pace

We then do away from the climb,
For precious is our time:
It need spending on something real—whatever
We decide: reels; obsessing about Heather:

It doesn’t come good. It is hooded,
Winked is true source that needs blooding—not
In the ever-expanding mountain, allotted, forced
From outside on one who is not engaging in their own course; hence

Control—becoming tense—is lost
Without a toss.

O There’ll Be a Next Time

I acknowledge that you and your actions were you and your actions
In this manner so I remain creatively at a distance
Still; and that the macro

Talk of Eros is not particularly helpful, paradoxically,
Either, considering this is an “acknowledgment”;
So this can tentatively be said

To be an improvement as well as widely applicable. Open
To interpretation perhaps: excellent.
To cut through

Other faux distancers though
To how it irrationally feels, for what it's worth, it feels
Like it was such an inevitability

That it is almost comical as well as
Meaningful, because some seem
To have to come along to move up through it all (the insufferable

Logic and thought challenging: good grief) before
Moving down through it all too
As an individual

Bodily, thoughtlessly,
So "acknowledgements … open to interpretation" do not have to be confusing
To the ones at the front until next time.

The Block I Was Looking at Earlier Though?

I have little respect for these
Tools, nor the garage nor the car
Nor the driver and most definitely not
The passenger—any of these on their own; and did I mention

The tools? Sounds like I did—maybe twice!
And how I do not respect them
Also. Is this the block I was looking at earlier though? This here, under
The hood: the engine block. Convenient

How it's kept there—how I'm an engineer and how I've visited
The garage again today, considering I'm more
Into the performance of the journey and how it
Feels, overall: Mike—please forgive me

For what I said earlier. I respect your discipline and I
Wouldn't dream of you looking back at me like that again.

I Don't Think You've Any Problems in That Department

Memories, swallowed by coitus.
What was I telling that therapist?
I don't mean to make a fuss, but…
O it's nothing.

I once had an imaginary dog.
A single dogman, it galloped through the fog.
It's now gone.
So I'm losing my strength.

Apprehensive, I'm heightened in your company.
This feels disingenuous.
This is what we call "love".
I am going to move away

To have more swallowed by coitus
Without therapist.

Still Cute Though

Drama in here! I do enjoy this posh food
Sometimes though so I'm glad we got invited—although now
Our mate has quit I don't think we'll be coming back; but I've noticed
That it isn't the better quality ingredients
That make my stomach feel off, but more so, that it feels
Off anyway. It's just that these goremay dishes
Don't have enough grease to cover up the pain. Fuck off—
You understood, didn't you? See that's the problem
With you I'm trying to explain myself and make sense
Of what's going on within me as I do keep having these stomach
Brain body problems but you just mock and criti-
Fine: one can be "problem"
And one can be "issues"; you
Criticise us constantly when we're just trying to get ourselves into a position
To enjoy these meals. Well yes Minty is
Turning that particularly expensive napkin
Into a chicken, while Sally
Is saying that… is it a sausage? we couldn't tell… looks like
Sumin else. But can't we fucking laugh while we improve our table manners?
Look at you, making all these assumptions
Along the way too—and you're a writer
For which magazine? Right. Never heard of it.
When really you and your mates need us here, don't you—
Turning up in dribs and drabs looking for another way—
Because your industry is struggling, we know—everyone reads
Those papers: awful!—and you're running out of ideas and the "wanky twats"—ha!—
As my mate called them: even they are going skint
And bored. Though I spoke to a few of them
Over there and they are actually
Sound. "I used to come in with paint-stained overalls on
When I first started dining here too," one even said to me. Look just tell the owners
To chuck a greasy burger on the menu now and then: that'll get
Us in. You're writing a review on how people are struggling
To dine out though, yeah? Good job really!
It proper looks like a dick though, don't it? Jesus *Christ*—my stomach! D'you reckon it's
something to do with the lymphatic system?

Yeah Probably

Flix to Bristol
First to Bath
I'm running a marathon
On the cycle track

The last time I ran a marathon I was out of whack
I'd just split up with a twat
I was living with two others
One was addicted to smack; not really

It was cocaine but that didn't rhyme
I got an atrocious time. My training had been bad
Haha the twat had slept with another lad; she has
Since had to move back in with her dad

What. What do you mean? I didn't say that
One day. Yeah one day maybe it'll be completely gone
Look I'm just trying to sleep, mate
Sub 4 hours all being well, but… yeah

Yeah similar situation, though I was more of a twat
This time. Yeah this time
Are you confusing me with the wrong poem?
It's weird in the outback

Of the cycle track. Yeah one loop out and back
Green Park in Bath to near Greenbank
Cemetery. Yeah probably—I've not heard anything
Not really. I was joking! Yeah the X39

Poem in Thicket

It is you. I mean, it is that
Over there. It is them over there.
I might have said it elsewhere. Did I
Post that? You stare
At the poem: it is that. What is *this*?
You look down your nose
At me: the poem waves. It falls as you
Glare. It glares down at you
In golden light, bluing
The strikes,in the middle of the night.

Don't fight yourself. Don't alight yourself.
Fight me. I won't take you.
You can take me anywhere, partner—
Reader. Maybe it is all you, yeah?
That is for the others—don't worry:
We are friends. You do not need these poor
Bends. Your favourites don't offend. Above
Or below, the poem is suspended
By you. By me, you mean!
Why can't they just stop doing that?

Bracken, Satin, Wagon

A bird lands on your shoulder,
"Do you think the words will take you over?"
It flies off
And you scoff

At what

Could never happen. Clapham.
Happy! To now be you and not me
For many more centuries.

No Rule of Thumb

The things You say You Are
Are directly proportional to the things You say I'm not
But you are

Until you are not
And the poem is funny, at best.

Sonnet

I had a film
But now it's gone. I'll add this part to
Another one. You will not even notice.
You cannot even see the seam. "Film"
Once said "poem". I changed it seconds ago.
Hours ago I
Changed "Good boy!" into faster splits. Ooo—am
I in the *Forward Book of Poetry* this year?
No. I wasted my
Child who writes to make me go go go.
Bear with me I am still
Trying to work out how to link it back; maybe
I just think it's all crap.
I couldn't not.

More Poetic Sky

O god FUCK I've just slept with everyone
I live with: I blinked and
Everyone was naked
And satisfied. Then awkward! How do I navigate
The kitchen and borrow a knife now?!

If Trump can negotiate a peace deal I
Can surely manage this: "Hi… erm…
Can I use your bread knife?" "Sure! Of course!
You've given me the time of my life! What
Are you doing tonight? ;)" Someone

Is lying: what literally was I even saying
In this poem
133 minutes ago? "Nothing. Writing
Poetry, probably. Was this knife always yours?" "Yes
And no. It was taken! I reclaimed it! But I've

Heard your poetry is absolutely fantastic!" I am
Not going near the rest of that shit. "Could I
Maybe borrow your… doesn't matter." I regret

Putting my finger in so many pies—I
Instead drone into the poetic sky.

Ignore the Shrubbery

I get there's nothing to get but then they do
That something I'm seeing in them which leads me
To furiously doing it again in a bush.

Home, as taken care of
As a crisp white sheet you take out the printer as a child, is a safer
Place—relax here—to cool the confusion

Of the bus stop.
Are you already there? Perhaps you're listening
To what you heard the crocuses waving: they

Are the purple ones? No don't tell me.
Don't tell me!
OK I'm just going to read down the timetable, as it gives

Me shivers, even if they never come on time
As stated: I ignore the shrubbery. Together, we ignore the shrubbery.

Report Me

O memory! Arbitrary
Entry for a poem! I know
What it is doing.
I won't let it consume my working day though!
It is still

Dictating the poem, somewhat. I live beside it!
I exist
Beside *me*! "I love beside it!" it
Wanted that to be.
How choppy can I make

Me? Haha I doubt any of us could categorical state
How maladaptive it is, but you should see me spread-
Sheeting besides this. I don't
Work really. I'm a poem! I may have topped out.
Totalled! Titled!

"How you felt
In that particular moment
In her bed though, eh." No! No me
Poem! I mean *you*
Poem! Yeah I'll send the report through now.

More Filter

I work by the Globe—the world

Is my Pret: I'm Hamlet,
Othello. O hi! Hello! No I'm not
A poet, literally. No. No I am not him—
Throw that tomato at someone else: I am
Working from my house, boss. Promise.
Look why don't you fuck off
Poetically—can't you see that I am

Completely detached from reality? Thanks.
Yeah thanks I'll let you know when I'm feeling better.
Around the corner is a violin player—a
Violinist: they can't rhyme: they sound dire
Beneath Southwark Bridge—A Whole New World;
Pure Imagination. "Mate! Can't you turn that down
A smidge?!" I don't say; because really they sound
Absolutely fantastic. I might be making up all of this.

I'm not. No one passing nods. A soundtrack
Dreamt up is the only thing that works—until…
St Paul's clock! 3 o'clock! I literally have 2 more hours
Left at work—then days and weeks and months and
Years more: maybe I should exit the stage door
Into the sea. Maybe I should've concentrated more
On future me at university. Or in Drama!—I
Concentrated *on* drama instead, and getting

Every single one of them into my bed: I am literally
Lying—it used to make me absolutely terrified: this
Script is fried. I cannot work with this! Get thee
Anywhere other than this, Ashley: I
Move to another Pret, by another
Bridge: yes—it's a threat. And *still* no one nods.
Below Wren's dome? Gods. Wellington! He beat
Napoleon! Little man syndrome? Revealing. Not really.

A Type of Comedo

I pop a zit
Metaphorically it is a poem: "zit"
To span markets.
I'm getting the knack of this

Someone says: the child
Wants a legacy.
I want to climb a tree.
The theories are paradoxical—FUCK.

The poems are not categorical: phew.
The ooze
Fills a few tissues. Big issues. My issues
Will be king, yada yada.

"If you squeeze it any harder it'll

Pop—and sting." I watch. I don't look. "Look is that
Enough for today, please?" There's puss
All over the sheets—because

I am three; with a thesaurus and a
Dictionary. With spots
Covering me. "It's a shame." It's
Not: I wipe them in this notepad. Then I don't feel

So bad. Anyway I didn't want to discuss
Any of this: can you get me published in Harper's?
"Pimple"?! Hardly—the rhyming's
Ready. "A type of comed…*o*"? OK.

Eleventh Dimension

I do not believe a word that comes out of her mouth,
But that's what I was nursed on so there's nothing to work out, there's just
Sitting in deep dissociation while she floats to heaven, both in
My eyes and in herself as she is a cat and I am cream.

This
Is the dream relationship. I've worked hard to create it
In my head after one date. Lacan would have a field
Minute with me and then end the session by saying, "Finally—

Somebody understands me!" She reminds me
Of an entirety. She blinds me with her controversy
Every single second about absolutely nothing.
If she gets a bun in the oven it will be the Second

No actually it'd be like the Eleventh Dimension Coming
Out as a new form of dough that doesn't even need flour
To raise itself. In fact while I am here having my being devoured by her I could
Throw something together myself laying myself on it thickly exactly like the delightfully-
poisonous flower that she is also does.

Attack on a Heritage That We Cherish Because It Is Our History

I am suffering from a major outage. I have just
Made some serious coinage
On the dark web, from a beautiful brooch
I got from this little place I know in Paris:
I am talking literally a load of shit;

And it is "priceless" and of "immeasurable heritage
Value". I mean I am a poet(!)
And I exist only on pen and paper: Bezos'
Cloud cannot touch this because I am in
My own cloud; which is only impacted

If the BBC is down. Yeah send bitcoin, pal—
I cannot access my Halifax: I don't understand.

Je ne comprends pas. I am going to clown
And drown in my nonsense sound until the fault
Is found: here is £18 trillion, hacker—please

May we have our jewels back? I want to play
Roblox. I want to stop jotting nonstop crap
With this ancient weight around my neck
Literally from the jewellery I stole: there is a hole
In my skull—I cannot uphold any subtle poetic conceit

Today. Let us prey Bezos does not simply hide away
In his bunker while the world goes up in flames—yeah
Sorry, mate: that crown is worth literally nowt.
And this is the fallout from you buying berserk tat
Devoutly. "Sounds like the Notes app broke too, Ashley."

From the Pool

The fish
Jumps on the
Land and
Cannot breathe
Die millions more
Try perhaps
Billions until one breathes
Stands, decent
Posture, quiet, you
Jump back
From the Pool

Not My Vehicle (Again)

"But at the same high rate of speed, Herzog streaked off on another course"
—Saul Bellow, Herzog

Speed awareness? Do I
Need this? The poet
Is very lucid
About being an absolute lunatic

When he was driving back from Stratford, judge: the
Passengers
Were to blame. I mean I was on my
Own. I mean, they are in my head.

I mean the reader made me do it: 78
In a 70? It is hardly even a felony! "Hi, Ashley.
Someone will let you in shortly." Three hours
Online and I cannot even turn off my screen?!

He never turns off his screen anyway—I
Am literally speeding awaiting Teams: it's
Not a race, but I will win—flying

Past Cheltenham in a Mercedes Benz. If the waiting

Room does not end this may go beyond
Six stanzas. Tony Soprano
Lies on the other screen in his loafers. I'll lie
On this one: "Yes—I am taking all of this in." His brain

Sits next to him, typing. "No—not
While I was steering: I'm joking." Dr. Melfi
Is the only one that can get him going
Currently. "I plead the fifth." I need

A seventh—to make some sense while I wait: no one
Shows. I'm stuck with Tony's shoes. The poetry
Is criminal. I mean it's subliminal. "I mean my speeding
Was minimal!" It literally wasn't even my vehicle.

There Is No Limit to the Number of Entries a Single Entrant Can Make

The 2025 National Poetry Competition
Closes soon! Only I do not have the time
To write any entries for the 2025 National Poetry
Competition, which closes soon, because

I am too busy reading endless notification
Emails telling me that the 2025 National Poetry
Competition—which closes to entries soon, by
The way—closes soon; which is

A shame, because they are looking forward
To looking forward to receiving my poems; which
Can be polished polished using their latest
Prompt sheet which is now available and ready

To be used used used used and can help generate
New material. They also want my £8 entry fee;
Subsequent poems can be ANOTHER ANOTHER
NEW PROMPT SHEET! submitted for £6 each.

Nebuchadnezzar

Compensatory gossip for failing eye contact,
Mr Wolf, becoming statute. Give it another decade.
What d'you mean—always? Then we should do-
Tomorrow?! *How* is it always disappearing though? O.

It is a nightmare in this kitchen: somewhat
Factually correct. What is *more* factually correct
Is that I cook and clean my cooking apparatus, eat,
Wash my plate straight away, and then put it all

Away believing that is leading by some example.
How many use my kitchen? Dunno—I'm not failing.

I mean I'm not looking. I mean I'm not side-eyeing and
Saying otherwise. No—that is not what I meant,

Judge. I *did* see it coming though, yes: I was trying to
Ignore the mould growing on the veg. Look why is all-
FINE I raised my voice. Vociferated?! You too? Poetry,
Rights, legumes, I said. Wolfie?! lol I've read similar.

That Suffering Joker

"His achievements were not only scholarly but sexual."
—*Saul Bellow,* Herzog

I literally went out of my
Way to change her physiology.
"What have you done for me lately?" she says.
I cannot remember the last time that she paid;

I block her and all of her friends, even
The fit ones. "Yeah so what? Yeah—and:
I wouldn't have actually done anything about it.
I didn't know I was like this either. And aren't

You blocked?" This is my lot. This is what my being
Does. This is what it means to save women
Poetically. This is what it is to Flix
To Bristol and flux and flex

Drivel. This is the part where I apologise, and
Correct the poem: I know full well, literally,
What I am like—I just have an astounding capacity
To ignore it. But everyone is a bit flawed and

Ignorey, aren't they? "I never want to speak to you a-"
Yeah you will—give it some time. Let the sinew
Marinate. Let the hate
Dissipate and then we will be mates and you will

Accept that your fate was always aligned with mine
Poetically, again—because I am now with your friend.
Only joking—I am making everything up: blame the
Near rhyme because I know your life has changed.

"He knew his scribbling, his letter-writing, was ridiculous. It was involuntary."
—*Saul Bellow,* Herzog

Literally the Spy Who Shagged You

I sit
Opposite
MI6
In Pret. I'm a threat.
I'm a Chinese spy. I

Lie: that only bothers MI5. I lie
Again, on my sofa

The day before
I cycle to Vauxhall
Bridge. I kid
You not. I literally kid you all of the time.
I am a domestic terrorist
Poetically—because it rhymes. Yes I've
Time, boss. I've some capacity.

Just let me quit
Being Sean Connery: one sec—I'm
Writing a sonnet. I'm not I'm
Four lines beyond it.
I'm running out of Prets and
Poetry, to be honest: can't I have a new assignment?
Simon

Pegg? Tom Cruise?! Mission
Impossible—sounds good. Because
Austin Powers would be too crude. Even though I'm
Literally The Spy Who Shagged You. Yeah
You. Everyone! It's why I moved to London! I mean I've
Never met them in my life, M. And you're right
Too, gaffer: I'm self-destructing—just like this poe-

What Did All That Mean?

I cycle and psychosis
I cannot focus
I get hit by a bus
Going over Southwark Bridge

I arrive in heaven
Haha imagine:
I arrive in hell—Hughes
Says Where did you learn to spell?

I drop down
A gear and steer through the dream
What did all that mean? I lean
Around the bends

Of the sketchy lanes forever
On the cusp of going literally absolutely
Insane due to what I refrain
Bleeding on the page

My brain across the central reservation
Attempting to get to the Tate
It isn't worth it, mate: I am always being chased
By the ghost of that head case, even down

Here—which doesn't even make sense, Hughes
Says: I thought the cycling
Would chase it all away; I hover above
The stream surveying where I went today

Staying Alive

I post three poems
I have a reminder
It gives my life meaning
No one cares

It's a shame
Everyone is insane
And is coming back in the same way
They came

Only they will also have a different name
I post and burn
I stand next to no one
Hoping to spur

My juices
It's useless
I stood so close to that poet
That'd been in The Guardian

I still wanted to die
I still stood outside
I still wanted to go back inside of her thighs
Could I?

Who is this guy? He's kinda neat
Is—but we don't like them
Why? Shy?
Staying alive

Whatever You Say

My legs ache. My heart aches.
My pen aches. No it doesn't. O yes it

But I ran on them anyway
Earlier: this is just the run off. Yeah—still pumping
Blood around the body: that's the main thing.
They are sore because I never give them any rest:

I don't do suffering—
I do pantomime villain

All year round, no off-season.
OK I have a break for a week after a marathon.

I do hyperdermicking on the
Surface of the skin. The page. It still reveals

The pain: I do not care.
It is in a cage. I mean a brace I

Twisted it. I didn't. That was ages ago. It
Made me go really slow. I struggled to train. No one
Came to the show. No one watches.
No one reads between the lines: it's

Behind you! It is. It literally is. OK right you are
Snow White: fine. Yeah—the fairest: whatever you say.

Honestly—Vile

Bodies pile up in
Our streets. I am writing a poem.
I am doing nothing about it.
I am calling you brave.
This poem makes me feel brave.

"Hegel for dinner and bell hooks
For dessert": I give the tramp what
He deserves: nothing. I mean books.
This poem makes you feel berserk.
You do nothing. Apologies—you don't

Look. Yeah shut the fuck, pal? You
Don't understand. It's OK. It'll be alright: you'll
Die in the night. Never read them, personally. Words
Will get you off the street though.
Chew. Just chew on that page again.

Do you have any idea how much of my own
Recreational time I spent thinking about how
To write that? I go on long walks and stare
Through you. It takes discipline. Try it!
And the effort to get a publisher? Well.

Oh my god that sounds terrible I'm glad I stopped to
Talk to you because I need to tell someone: the other
Night—I told you about the event I was going to, right?
Well he just looked right through me! And he clearly
Saw me preparing to read I mean honestly—vile.

Great Insulation

I'm empty. On the surface.
You are good and I am not.
No one likes them so
The world can just get more good.

Floods. Nightmares.
Unconnected but rhymed: sure.
I know you don't want anymore, but
You can't kill me off. You can't

Cut me off. It never goes away, does it: you spray
The ant's nest
(Pests!) and still they return
When the seasons turn

Seconds later. You barely noticed,
Yeah. The mags'll make great insulation.

Not Really

Another cleanse. I feel
Absolutely fantastic
Feeling nothing: I hadn't
Noticed—she
Told me; in between her being at the mercy
Of ages ago. Give it a day
Or so and I will be having another go

With someone else
For a day or two. I am going to capitulate
In a few days, I mean. No I didn't. No you read that
Wrong: do not contact me again.
Do not read my poetry. Sorry—that
Was for someone else: I am
Trying out a new

Voice: look—can you not? Dunno:
I'm preempting. The poetic me is literally empty: my
Pen (and btw: it's really just me tapping
On my phone) is full of washing powder. Fairy

Drivel. Right. Right OK—let's see how you get on
Behaving like that then: good luck! Nah. Nah not been

Dating much. Fuck! Really?! That sounds
Really tough. Not really.

"Nothing" Sounded Better Than "Anything" in the Second Stanza

I run and pun
~~And have sex with everyone~~
And pretend I'm everyone.
I am laughing
At myself
Literally. No one reads them. The joke
From the kitchen
I forgot. You should literally forget it.

I have sex with everyone—
I didn't have a choice:
I couldn't think of nothing else to put.
My mother was yada. My father

Was harder. The thought of it makes me speed
Up: I pun
To slow it down. I run to
Channel it out, also. I am not reading yours either.
You should read yours back and cringe. Deranged
Berserk yada.
This
May be maladaptive. My housemate has a new fringe.

A mere four lines to resolve.
I am a five years old, yada.
I lost it in the larder.
I joke: I literally cannot remember.

Finally!

"there is something the matter with him
because he thinks
there must be something the matter with us"
—R. D. Laing, Knots

The pain came back and it meant you didn't
Think about the thing
That you aren't thinking and never thought: it's why
I said it quick on your behalf.

A burst of love! And lunch? We have only
Just and you need it again. And we need you
To need it again: you're writing the labels—
Maybe next time? Because you make it stick so well

Contemporarily, existing at the same time:
It's how you get me. Sorry—but it is: this is
Terrible, but if you scream and wave louder I…
Yes it worked! Thanks—mine's stuck fast again and

Reusable. Lunch? Sure! I could watch you all day!
Maybe that's my job—stops you
Eating around the edge? It's lukewarm
At best? No—you're right: all tongues are different.

And if you want to lick it like that who's stopping you,
Eh? I dunno if it's a right though—soup?! I see: it *does*
Benefit me! Seems to annoy you though…? Probably
The fact that the croutons are already sunk.

But there's a minister for that now! There's
Not. Sorry. Though I thought we were friends: I made

Lunch! Well you basically threw the ingredients at me.
You… pretended to enjoy it? Finally! Let's start there.

Started Something on 27th—Made It a Sonnet

I don't read the comments.
I don't view the likes.
I can't sleep. There's hardly any.
I lie. My nose
Reveals nothing to anyone
But myself. I don't feel suicidal anymore.
It is probably that. I am tying
A knot. It is definitely not a bow.
This
And this for pacing. O but then this really aced it.

We have done everything that we needed to do.
We are so comfortable; meaning
I
Don't know what my point was seven days ago.

Leaf Rubbing

The leaves are everywhere. They have fallen down.
It means whatever you see. We are all
Going to die. Everything is going to go away
Eventually but it will keep coming back a lot first
While the robin is somebody's relative

And we want narrative. Old ones carpet the concrete.
I laid a sheet
Of paper over them as a child, and rubbed charcoal
Over the top to get some texture. I would take the rub
Home with the hope of discussing it over dinner:

It never happened—and so when they fell, I used
To think of this, but now I don't, knowing
The robin could not possibly be them, nor
Could it ever have been, fallen or not, thankfully.

Exceedingly Rare

"And now, he said, please deny there was ever a house."
—John Ashbery, 'Coventry'

Blimey! I was just doing some yoga,
And I stretched my little toe
Too gung-ho and I've sent myself

Back to Coventry! I'm ostracised
Above my body
Watching the ruins of the city. It's

Causing me some concern: I'm
Frozen in the outdated
Poses of my ancestors! But let me

Note it all down now
In this paperwork. We can then just
Regurgitate and perpetu- Wait!—it's

Gone! Like the aftermath
Of an atomic bomb: blitzed! Nothing's wrong!
I was singing a song? Not
Me: the lyrics did abscond.

The Sopranos

I take a shit
On social media. I mean
It is like child birth.
I mean this place is a toilet.

Time's up! See you next week?
You'll be OK. You have the leaflet.
Look, have you tried just… not looking
At it—unfollowing them? Wow it's

Next week already? It is the following
Day. The exposure does wonders. Stories
Matter. It is why you are viewing the story
Again. Are you sure you want to share

Fine: no one knows you better than yourself.
The exposure does wonders. We've been here
Before and we got through it last time.
Don't mention it. Honestly: it is what I get paid to do—

And it's extortionate, yes: have you
Tried taking a shit? Following
Your nose? I ended up watching *The Sopranos*: it
Taught me loads

More than any of these books. We've been here
Before. You are scrolling on a roll. I have died
For my children; and would again!—hence
Same again tomorrow: exactly.

If Only

They can't help it; but if the working
Men's clubs only knew what you knew, then you wouldn't
Feel like twatting them in the back of the head, would you:
This endeavour. Whatever *will* we do with them. Then they
Just stop *dead*
In front of us in the middle of the

Street even on the green path
Around the memorial park, we… aren't too
Sure about anymore. Well it's just… when

I left the club, there was a book
On the wall about consciousness, and another
About "war"…

Look I don't want to sound conspiratorial, but there's
Got to be a reason
They stop in front of *us*
Whenever we try to get anywhere? I need

To think about it more though. The writing
Retreat will be good—yes. Am I fuck:
Letting *him* drive? I'm making my own way there.
I knowwwww but I'd rather *not* carshare
If it gives me time to think about how to reach them
Back in the club
With all my prescription and

Modulation, because it's the *modalities*
That are *crucial* for delivering the right message. Now you *say*
They aren't related, but that's what they want you to believe.
It's how I control my
Urge to twat them. I can then focus on changing their
Universe. With little thanks! Not
That I attend these groups for that. And it *is* a nice park! I
Was just considering all the options. We need to stay open minded!
I mean even the *wall*
Offered something. If only they *listened* though!

<u>One With Kanye West, Caral Barat, and Pret</u>

'Black Skinhead'
To Pret
By the Globe. A babe
On her phone
Steps out into the road: I
Let her go
Past. I slow. Do I love her?
Probably. Would she make a good
Mother? No: progress
Begins to show. It won't last—I cycle

Faster. Mr West
Is a terror for making me race a bus
Across Southwark
At 6,000 mph. "And fuck
Her—she can walk! The traffic can have her." Nor
Would he make a good
Father, the poet—I
Know it: *Yeezus*

In his ears across London
Without a helmet?! Lying—I always wear a helmet: my

Type require it. Yeah. Yeah my
Typing. 'I Am a God': frightening. Carl Barat
Sits down on the table next to me: I am
Not even literally even joking.
It makes me realise my life—my
Poetry, is pony: I throw myself
Into the Thames. I don't—I just stop writing
Temporarily. "Carl! Where's Doherty?!" I
Don't say: I bottle it—the lid on
Pushing down all of it, dreadfully.

Camp

"Yeah. That'd be cool."
"Anyway there was an expedition near here. This century. So near! And they were stranded and what not and a few died and the live ones flayed them and closed their eyes when they ate them so they didn't have to know who they were eating. Convinced themselves as much as possible. But one says, 'It's just… flesh and bone still. Meat and drink. The same underneath, all ours. Do as we please!' And they ate easier. Entirely seamlessly chewing and swallowing with no digestive issues."
"How'd you know this?"
"All written."
"What they said?"
"Same!"

Ambiguity

"There comes a time when every ridiculous son of Adam wishes to arise before the rest, with all his quirks and twitches and ties, all the glory of his self-adored ugliness, his grinning teeth, his sharp nose, his madly twisted reason, saying to the rest—in an overflow of narcissism which he interprets as benevolence—'I am here to witness. I am come to be your exemplar.'"
—*Saul Bellow,* Herzog

You are trapped beneath deep layers of narcissism.
You are frowning because you are.
You are taking that as a truism because you are.
You will experience deep layers of pain

If you are lucky. It could not possibly be you.
You have been seeing them every week for years,
So many different varieties. So many YouTube shorts.
You are talking to yourself.

You pour in the future and the past pours out
And you do not notice and it would be better to not
Capture it. The whole poem is you.
You are a masquerading danger. Your

Relationships are in tatters and are strung together

With feigned interests and curated self-deprecation.
You have seconds of realisation and you cannot text
Your friends saying What the fuck did you read

Because you feel it is you. You will come back
Just as disastrously because you will not do anything
About it because you are a coward controlled
By the measures your pain takes to protect itself from

Being able to recognise itself. It is the same every day
Isn't it, you lowlife—you cowering behind faux shock
At reading what you know is you. What did you do?
You are incapable of doing anything to change it now.

Don Juans on Ones

"It's a god-awful small affair
To the girl with the mousy hair"
—David Bowie, 'Life on Mars?'

She's reading him my Beauvoir
In my Eminem T-shirt: he's
Triggered. He calls up his dealer
And puts on his VR headset.

We don't know why I'm like this (yeah right).
Will I ever keep a pair of tits?
He has a dormant surprise
For hers——OK that's it;

Not quite!: I tried
With all my might
To keep this poem inside—to forget
About them: it's

Gone, again. The fantasy and friendship
Have gone (again). Don't get me wron-

That was it! How could I forget!—

How weird it is, the ~~herp-~~ poetry
We choose to live with.

The Cuntish Droners

You walk into Wetherspoons, Peckham.
Everyone thinks you are absolutely incredible.
It is ineffable
What they want to say to you, because they cannot
Articulate themselves. There are people

From all over the universe. They are staggered by this
Worldly poet that's walked in that is so skilled

And cultured and morally impeccable: “What

You want to say to me, mate: it is ineffable,” you say.
“What mean, messiah?” Bless them. A god among
Peasants. “What we say—us poets: it doesn’t matter,
Peasant. For I have come to walk among you, because

It is more pleasant than being out there
With the maniacs.” Peasant winks back. “I know.”

Like Fucking

“Constitutional tension of whatever origin needed sexual relief. Whatever the man's age, history, condition, knowledge, culture, development, he had an erection. Good currency anywhere. Recognized by the Bank of England. Why should his memories injure him now?”
—*Saul Bellow,* Herzog

I thought the
Quote would make a good epigraph.
I’ve written nothing.
My memories-cum-poetry
Cannot injure us currently, but I need to practice: I lift
Digits and bang them down
On a screen. Like lifting weights, yeah.
Yeah and that's like fucking; which makes

The quote an appropriate epigraph now:
The penetrating
Delusion of thought becomes
Verse. Cannot sustain a metaphor: it works
Obviously—until I rub it, and it spurts
And hurts: more notes are made, at least.

The Pitch

I am the pastiche of pastiche. I am the thing
Of the thing of the object
That was the thing (I am
Inside it) like a pinprick, disappearing

Creating a racket and
A runway and a waxwork of
Myself; I walk in—inside in—as well. Also

I’m taking commissions. Also I’m
Not asking permission: the world
Needs my episodes! So I am making a

Pilot… of a… pilot! That isn’t a pilot!
That takes off! Only they don’t…
Go… Or maybe they go…?
And then they land after a few seasons.

The Fate of Yada

I enjamb and spam and
Don't know who I am—I'm
At the National
For *Hamlet*, thankfully. That'll sort it.
Hopefully he jumps off stage and
Takes my voice. My pen. Alas
He didn't—even though
I was in the front row. And Kenneth Branagh

He wasn't: I wrote
This even before the show, like
I already knew. Gertrude
Made me right confused: literally
His mother. Can relate. Can't
Anymore, actually! I don't know what else to say—
The seat next to me
Is spare: I knew her, Horatio. No! Just dead to me:

I offered no one else the ticket
So I could live with my indecision: what kind
Of life am I living? I find
My mind floating on the ceiling
Constantly, without rhythm. Not really. OK sometimes.
OK a lot—Ophelia is literally better off: get her
Away! Nunnery! Save a spot
For me. I'm joking! I can literally just sit beside me.

Stupid Fad

I'm at the National Theatre.
Haha Ash we weren't meant to make it here!
The maenads were meant to tear me apart
But they killed the king instead
Even though I consistently broke their hearts: I'm here

For *Bacchae*. Look, don't blame me: I'm just a little
Dionysusey! I am not sure if I am Ancient Greek
Or Roman. There are literally thousands of them
Trying to leave the stage and have a frenzied orgy
With me regardless and there's nowt I can do about it.

Not really: they are about to start the performance.
One day I am going to consider quitting
This performance but then I will not. Orpheus
Should have got shot of that harp and got on
With someone else rather than being stuck south: I

Am now stuck south. I mean, I'm next to the stage.
I can touch the stage and the stage can touch me—it's
Touching. It's not. It is literally a frenzied orgy, I mean.
The main Bacchae Vida gets the play started

Late: it's 19:33—I'm saying nothing. I'm lying: 36—

I was rhyming. Dionysus was wining and rhyming
Wickedly. The play then mentioned his mummy—
"Some of these reworkings are so fucking silly!" I say;
The wild things return to the stage—"Cringe, mate!"
"No! I can change! I'll humble myself! I don't know

How to even say my own name: I admit it!" The god
Of insanity literally starts to go insane. And he's in
My seat! I watch him speak and weep and wonder
Why his father sewed him into his thigh… "Why, too,
Do I make my followers literally eat bull?" The theatre

Is full: I'll be the god of that—we can behave like twats
There and it doesn't matter because it isn't real.
"Those gathered here today: I have healed! I can feel!"
No one cares—I have sent my auntie mad. She tears
Off her own son's head: dead. Too bad. Stupid fad.

The Notebook

Rooftop. *The Notebook*. I don't know
What else to put—the view:
The Shard. The Gherkin. More
Vegetables beneath me, I assume:

It is a bit like giving a poetry reading, being
Up here. Where is Gerard Butler?
"I think you're thinking of another
Movie." What do I know of romantic

Comedies—and/or dramas? Terrible genres.
I literally fell apart at the end: the wind
Blew. We held each other and didn't know
What to do: what're they thinking? "I'm

Just letting it sink in, Gerard." "But I'm not
Him?" The hot chocolate tasted
Absolutely disgusting. Sour. "I know." Hours
On a house just to get over her? Loser. "He's

A bit naff. But she is absolutely amazing!" "Bring
Her next time then!" The peas beneath looked
Tempting. "Well it is a bit fruity!" Though it never
Solves anything, does it? "I reckon it would actually

Be nice, to forget everything. Crying? Dunno—
The view! What's your excuse?" Another film—
I got confused. It replays a lot! "Who
Are you speaking to? Look do you want to go back

To his, or what? Yeah!—what *would* we do up here

In a downpour?" The sea beneath looked tempting—
The Thames. "Yeah millions of times. Every night. It's
Replayed a lot!" I dunno what else to put—but

"It's better than thinking about that lot, ain't it!" I did
Literally have plans to build myself something
A few times, "but I got distracted." "What? Is this
OK? You seem distracted." Again? Nah I've not seen it.

Some Character

"On these terms I, too—even I!—apprehend certain things. Perhaps the only way I'm able to do it. Must play the instrument I've got.
"You've been painting this piano, I see.""
—*Saul Bellow,* Herzog

I pay for everything. She pillow
Princesses. We feign that she's a goddess.
I feign I am a poet.
We get no likes. The centre shivers. Her belly

Belches and releases history. The reader
Considers and
Stays for the second half; because what if
They notice

And think like me? And I can't
Sleep anyway. What did I eat? This
Gas. We could do with changing the sheets: I can't
Face them. But we have a semblance of

Existence. I mean I am
Everything—just not when I'm performing
On stage: who do we think's watching?
You are right though: I did

Facilitate that delusion. And you…
Felt nothing too? The memory foam
Was cool though, wasn't it: whatever we choose.
I barely iron them n-

Excuse me! Bless me! I'm so
I'm not—I just thought it would help: you shone.
For three minutes. It helped me sleep also! Us both!
You'd never admit it. O it was nothing. Priceless.

"Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the selfsame sounds
On my spirit make a music, too."
—Wallace Stevens, 'Peter Quince at the Clavier'

Cool Route

I run through Hyde Park.
I don't forgive anyone.
I pick up the phone and forget it within seconds:
I hold

It further. Poem. Fuck off. I glide
To sleep beside myself. Probably won't.
Do as I do, not
As I write. Do the terrifying

Work to do as I write. Fine just think it deranged.
Aiming for sub-3:15. Truth
Be told I might as well be in a fish bowl.
My body will not let it go—it's weird

Because it funds the intervals.
Week of projected hate. When am I going to wake?
I coulda done it last time: bet I bottled it.
Fucking painting or summut.

Never me. Always a touch above.
A touch removed to keep us going, keep the
Swim up. Swim out
The shallows. Hand in hand, riled

Or capitulated you better not be favouring this.
Literature is a disgusting cowardly business.
Berserk pervy burps made metaphysical.
Reckon I'll squeeze 6 miles in at lunch.

Make a Gate

What if I take certain rules of the playground
And play elsewhere with them, and want you
To watch, to stand at the fence which I will
Mix-up, very obviously—I will make a gate
And it'll be open, but it'll also be closed, no
Explanation—and I fly to the ceiling, criticising
You and yet also mocking myself, flying
Again through work, mentioning work again
Too and perhaps making you question the image
You have of the wall that you are at, now.

That is how I felt, momentarily, earlier, somewhere,
In some way. And it went away. And that is OK;
Imagine! I calm *me* then. Concern
Enough for you and also not. I mean it is unlocked.

It Felt Like Something

Sometimes I bake a cake without even thinking about it haha.

Don't eat it then! Or
Eat it?
Strange. Who taught you that?

It was only a slice; I slept
And it was gone. Happens.
What do I expect? I used to think like that.
I didn't really say anything.

A kinda tiffin, I suppose! Though I like to make loads
It escapes me. Well I had another
Idea of a recipe, at least. Remember when we
Were students and threw eggs

In the air and let them land
No not on our heads—what?! On our chests. It felt like something.

Good Job It Isn't Me!

"This voice alone moves rapidly and lightly in modulations and runs, while all the others have only a slower movement without a connexion existing in each by itself."
—Arthur Schopenhauer, The World As Will and Representation

"Cunnilingus and psychiatry brought us to this."
—Tony Soprano, The Sopranos

FUCK I want to fuck everyone.
It is you.
I wonder if this is actually burning it off though.
Yada something meta-poetic.

Yes I'm afraid that is the rhythm.
I am literally going to have a nap
And see what happens.
Where were ~~we~~ you?

We have ways of making you talk
More
Slowly. I'm struggling. I am struggling
To feel dysregulated enough

To poet. Although if I sleep with the person that's
Been throwing themselves at me recently, I'll
Have no trouble writing further disintegrated
Voices for the following few months, judging

By their obvious desire
To sleep with everyone: yeah.
Yeah it is a bit
Faustian. Good job it isn't me! It's them, I mean.

I mean and so yeah. Yeah it's all
Ash, now. Burnt away!

I don't know who you mean. Yeah they
Were behaving really obscenely: not for… me?!

It's Important!

"I don't really deeply feel that anyone needs an airtight reason for quoting from the works of writers he loves"
—J. D. Salinger, 'Seymour: an Introduction'

Hail to the Thief
Hampstead Heath
Never been
Rhymed
You are a better person than me
Nah, mate—it's important! I was queuing
In Tesco

When the lines arrived
Where did the meaningful poetry go? How
Was I supposed to know
That you facaded? It's
Hard, ain't it. I was stealing.
I wasn't.
Your poetry is shocking.

I am always always arriving—I am
Not even queuing. I am looking at the track list.
I am looking at Google Images.
I suppose I better look to be consistent now.
I never lie. I creativise
Poetically. Ashley—surely
You are not going to post this? The

Cycle time is 49 minutes—and I
Will beat it. I won't. I *could*.
But I won't go. Look—stop lying! The problem
Isn't this poem!
It isn't writing's fault. It is your responsibility
And you are going to need to go there eventually.
Fine. Lie. Stand in line. Myxomatosis through Kentish.

"and poetry, surely, is a crisis, perhaps the only actionable one we can call our own. (I apologize for that verbiage. Unfortunately, there's probably more.)"
—J. D. Salinger, 'Seymour: an Introduction'

Calling All Cars

I sit in a million lives.
She mentions psychosis:
I cannot focus. I join
Up two ideas. I stitch
No metaphysics. I howl. I get stitch. I write
Whatever a stanza is called when it has six.

I release
Myself into voice, away from my peers. I
Dissociate when she talks: I recreate
What I'd rather not—I acknowledge
The impossible vacuum of poetry.
I want to be Elon Musk: let's see.

Why would anyone want to be him? You're
Right: I exaggerated with "million". But six
Or ~~seven seventeen seventeen hundred~~ seven different women
Lie with me and keep me fastened
To the poem I am leaving
Behind as I take off all my lines: I rip

Them off. O I tear
Away the flesh of my narration, and walk
Probably on water, if I tried—into
Not even the future: the moment. The vacuum yeah
Fair; which means I am clean. Weightless. Vac-
Uous. A palimpsest sponging psychosis: nice.

Deep Thought

"Ooh, lost, lost in the words that we scream
I don't even wanna do this anymore"
—Lady Gaga & Bruno Mars, 'Die With A Smile'

I zero's journey, live
On Insta. It happens in real time—it
Isn't happening at all: they're poems—I feel
Better. But at what cost? The poem goes self-

Reflexive. It shadow and spastics—fuck sake: it
Self-sabotages. I'm watching just like you,
Promise. I don't know where it
Comes from, honest. But I

Like the shape of this one, waving
Back and forth to the surface, on the
Surface. So show me some mercy!: nobody
Nursed me! They did, though inadequately: take the

Pen off me. Him! I am not even Ashley—excuse me.
Abuse me. I mean, get out of his way: the
Lines sway and say little—but show pain.
It's contained though! I don't complain!

I would if it stopped getting me laid. Seven
More lines to offend or entertain: is he insane?
Am I Cain? I'm unAbel to disable myself: terrible
Wordplay to combat himself. I honestly do not think or

Feel like this when the book's on the shelf—the pen:
My mouth is golden. A good boy! So love me! This
Is just a silly ploy—the stanzas are oscillating for
Attention. Started this at 8:37. It's now 42. Not.

Without a Love of My Own (Cover of *Newer Poetry*)

The grass is greener. The room
Is blue: that's the colour
Of the poetry—I'll never leave. The writer
Might. He might move out. The walls
Can travel, surely? But I won't change: I am

Profound. My ankle's
Sprained. My brain strains and
Pains, anyway. It doesn't. It poems. I am
Lost, he meant. Anyway what else is in the picture?
Medals. Books. A mirror

Doubling the pages. More to read into.
"I CROSSED THE LINE" supports
The medals. Fascinating. Me, apparently.
That mat has seen some sights. The poems
It could write. If walls could talk: they did

Once—the blue is nothing. The green
Distracting. Or… rejuvenating? But not
Today: I made my bed. My bad is laid. It
Was a choice. It's now equipped with a thousand
Voices; that were *not* greener, in fact: I must

Remember. I won't—what else is in the
Frame? The rug. The best relationship I've
Ever had: ten years. Beneath the yoga, it is—
Can't you tell? You can literally see it.
Plus a fire alarm on the ceiling.

It Wears Her Out, It Wears Her Out, It Wears Her Out, It Wears Her Out

Radiohead. Modernity.
Spare ticket
Next to me. Not really: resale.
Face value. Really. "This

Isn't my face, no—it's a poem.
Yeah. Yeah she was supposed to
Come with me, but she's blocked.
Yeah. Yeah on my bike. She was supposed

O. O I said that. Could you just hold
My han- No. No of course not." How
Come I end up
Because I am a fucking nightmare. The

Path
Around the Thames
Was black. Bumpy. The dome did guide me.
I came here

On a school trip
When I was eight
Last week
When it had a different face too.

“It’s dying. Yeah. Yeah my
Phone is dying. Nah—not bothered:
Who is going to text me?” I
Cycle off, the doom behind me haha fucking hell.

Poem by Someone

“It’s always about within the moment
I have no idea what I’m going to say right now
I have no idea what words are going to come out of my head”
—Ezra Collective, ‘Words by Steve’

I loosen a few more screws… I joke—I plumb
In a tap: it
Sounds like a twat; and I let it
Pour on the page now and then
So I do not have to pretend
Or end
Myself or end up with a brain haemorrhage: you
Should try it. It’ll also make me less of a twat, weirdly.

Sonnet! They’ve been stuck in the u-bend lately—
No idea: they prevent sewer gases
Entering houses, apparently. Your shit doesn’t…?
Right—fair enough. They’re… bolts in your neck, yeah?
Another joke; but what d’you expect! Dunno who
Put ‘um there though: your mum? Anyway fuck off?

If Only You

“‘I think you’re on fire.’ She gave the back of his hand a short, brisk, brushing stroke with the flats of her fingers. ‘No. It was just an ash.’”
—J. D. Salinger, ‘Pretty Mouth and Green My Eyes’

And the memory of the mother
Threatening from the kitchen pairs
With the memory of the Greatest
Lover The World Has Ever Seen, they

Dance—hand-in-hand, together
To you on the sofa—and it makes a moment
In a stanza: O consciousness. Experience.

Being. A fourth thing. How you repair

And entertain a reader. How you seek
Media for your painting eyes, strokes
From castings long ago: stones; roles;

And so unfulfilled projects from the Lord
Before which you know you are nodding
Asleep if only you stop poking.

Michael Vaughan

O to leave the politics
Of work and Teams
And group chats and WhatsApp
And synonymic rhymes, reader, to find you

Reader—and myself
Sliding down the Notes app; entering my
Body. Poem. No body. Becoming my being
Away from that first stanza.

I'm blissful. I am insufferable.
I am listening to Test Match Special.
Nightwatchman mode? Yes.
It is the entirety of my chest.

It is what I do best. What
Did they reply on the other chat? Fuck
Knows, boss—I do not care. I mean
I am completely detached

And I'll ask: yep—all sorted: I
Batted the problem back. No
Mate: I did not leave my washing up—
But I will willingly do yours

Because that is cricket. This
Is, indeed, absolute shit. But I feel
Calmer because of it.
Michael Vaughan sounds like a tit.

Thomas-Asante

Ipswich (A). Home end.
She isn't here. I'm not
Either, officer. No. No I am a
Tractor Boy, promise—I cut

Up the turf and
Enjamb. Frank
Lampard? Hate him.
I am on the train to the stadium; a

Man is running
Along the platform
Next to me. He runs beside me, yeah.
It is like the poet of the poem haha yeah—

You're getting there! The
"She"? One of several. Look, Thomas-Asante—
Cross the ball
Into the middle. There you go: one-nil

Coventry—and I can't
Jump up from my seat. I mean this
Isn't a booked seat, no—but I need
To face forward. To forget about them:

Yeah. You too? "I enjoy digging
Into the constitution of myself
From beside the train." Same. O look: it is now
Eight-million-nil! Insane. "(A)" is for "away".

Resolve Me!

Pret
Opposite
The Old
Vic. *A Christmas*
Carol: I wish. What
About a Mary? Holly?
Eve? Any, please—
Else I'll be Scrooge, losing

Again. Alone. Lonely. Not
Really—I'll be in Italy
Hopefully with a honey
Haemorrhaging money
Like I do on 50p filter coffee: O
Final line! Resolve me!

No That Was the Poem

"I'm a hugger!" Get the fuck away from me.
I do not let myself feel anything.
Poetically? Are you OK? What
Do you need? Is what I am really like

In real life. The skin
Of your clothing
Absorbs my spirit when we touch. You are
A bit much

And need more support—I mean
You are amazing. There is a strong

Correlation between you ensuring you appear to be
A good person, and the amount you subtly

Reveal that you are into BDSM. I feel it—
Sure. And make judgements with that.
I wonder why you keep needing to express it.
Well, whatever it is. No that was the poem.

Some Airport Pun

I hope they find my trunk of personalities.
I sit beside the runway
Waiting for the planes to land: I let
Me wait and then they come—it may
Take you to Graceland: I want to have my Graceland
And to be misunderstood, my trunk
Setup to *not* be found, found,
And tied up before the sestet:

I have given me away! The contrivance!
And yet what could you ever know of me
Now that I am gone, and this was strategically-placed
Three quarters of the way down in the hold—reader:
I was always an aircraft, and I flew
You and never myself, the vehicles aplenty.

Not Even Going to Rome

"Life? There's no such thing; I see lines, planes and bodies"
—Olga Tokarczuk, Flights

Lines
Placed on a flight as I think of you, lover,
Naked—for the epigraph. It gets me through flight
Lying does. It is potentially getting you through your

Lunch or toilet break; but they'll still be there
In the chair, next to you, moaning
All afternoon about that change
Management process. They'll still be at home

Wanting to moan, too. But blame the poem.
You are not even a lover; O
"Lover": fine! Designator! My
Sofa

Again—five days before a plane
Takes me away
From the pain into new pain; I
Feign, really: I do not experience anything.

Milan? Rome?
Every single woman's body in the whole entire?

Nothing.
More strokes for a game.

More notes for the shame. More rhymes
That sound like they could… No. No butchered.
The pilot, too, lies: "coming in for landing"?
I think… yeah—this'll work: understanding.

"Then says out of the darkness: 'We must research our pain.'"
—Olga Tokarczuk, Flights

<u>As Promised</u>

Stansted. Flight. Pret. Filter.
Further? Around
The corner? Another
Pret. And Spoons! Heaven? No.
Nah. Milan. Malpensa. Stanza

New. Ryanair. Ryanair.
Ryanair. Every flight. Every chair
Taken—I lie
On the floor, making
A meal

Of nothing; which isn't
Like moi. Sorry—me. Mi? Mi.
Me mi me. Lyric
Poetry. Too much caffeine. Too much
Tim Martin. Alien… saucer? Unlikely.

Martian. Rhyme. Four lines and
Two more hours until boarding: I
Might write 17 billion more poems
To keep me going in that time.
This line, as promised.

<u>You Are Still Unmoved</u>

Flights on a flight—what
Has she even been saying
For the first 265 pages? Olga
Rages on this page
Through a character, though. O I
See ya, Olg—that old
Trick, eh. I don't know what else
To say: I am on a plane. Insane. Plain yeah

OK—I know. The stories
Oscillate: they come and go.
How can one articulate a metaphysic
That suggests everything is so-so—neither here
Nor there? By voicing it it

Makes it. It shows. What
Am I even saying? The vacuum
Tube, in the sky, slows—

Explodes, on occasion. It is amazing they
Do not do it more often: I'm safe
Reading. Poem. Millions of
Memories as vignettes as
Fictions, leaving: put down that armrest.
Brace! Blind. Me brave; you
Unkind: the reader, flying. Hiding. Crashing. I mean
I'm crashing! I'm lying. You are still unmoved.

I'm Guessing Chest

Above the body. Above the pamphlet.
Above whatever underpass that was. Above
The seat. The bollards. The central
Reservation, flickering: you got me. Above the

Poetry. Above the repetition. Above the habitual
Destruction the strings do fiddle me toward; above
Me flirting with that fiddle, and ignoring
The pain. The consequences. The feigned psychosis.

Yeah so I'm on a coach: tarmac. Cement mixer.
Grey skies above *me,* trying, threatening
Their worst: I ignore 'um. Yeah. Yeah try it, weather—
Getting in my poem. I am listening to Harvey Mandel

And yada I am under a constant spell, that
Distinguishes me from hell, relinquishing me from tell-
Ing you anything in this poem, seemingly: I'm in
A tunnel. It is all around me. Now I am not—grass.

Trees. Some kind of feeling within the experience
Of the one typing, allegedly. Landed in Italy? Yeah.
The Shunters. I mean this is now Pepe Maina: no
Idea—housemate's playlist. Well no one's made you

Read it: you did. In fact it isn't even here; is. Fence—
Absolutely shambolic view for poetry, this: apologies.
Look if I wanted to rhyme I would be "tense", wouldn't
I—but I'm not. And so more trees. A tighten- Not really.

Parmigiano

Mantova to Modena. Am
I a prince of the Gonzaga? Gone
Yada yada, again, instead.
For the last week my writing has been dead.
Quattro Ville: my station, really—
I am going to discover

How they make balsamic vinegar
Nearby. Carpi—one more stop.
There is a reason I stopped
Harping on in this voice that clearly needs to cry: it

Gets me nowhere.
It makes you despair
And disappear. Have I really got to trek to the museo
In this rain, from the stazione? Pain. Parmigiano.

Giusti

Christmas Eve. Vinegar tasting. Bitter
Sweet. Can I try that one again
Please? No. No I don't want to buy it.
No I am not going to break
This habit—why? Where

Are the models at? Yeah the model
Barrels that Giuseppe and that
Took to Paris: the World's Fair.
No it's not. I prefer the other one.
The one I make up in my poetry? Yeah.

Panettone? Cioccolato? You balsam
Everything here, don't you—literally
Put it in battered old frame, and see
What happens. Tour's over? Scattante! Buon Natale.

Emilia Ovest

Christmas Day. Modena. Launderette.
Lavanderia. No. No that's just something in my
Washing. It is something in the machine—
A stain: it's going. Look just get me another

Espresso, yeah? Bar Europa
2000—the name of the place: it shows. The weather:
It rains. Blows. Jesus *Christ*: seven more lines and
Seventeen minutes to go

Until I'm clean?! Sonneted. Then I need to dry—
Fold. Give in. Hold
Someone. Abbracciami? I'm a sham

Am me; poetically: this is the best
Christmas, ever—Natale. I mean, never will I come
Here again. Phew!—I am now risen! to tumble them.

Novablast

I run around Milan.
I write it in Modena:

I go to Milan in an hour.
Liar—55 minutes: cannolo,
Espresso, prego: 8
Minutes ago; hence
This stanza
Being written at 10 million miles per hour.

Lying again—around
7.5 miles per hour: aerobic. Again.
Yes again, prego: these
Sweet little shots of caffeine
Are orgasmic—fuck it: 20
Marlboro red, please. In fact, give me a sleeve.
I mean, I need to leave
To get the train. I mean I need to train. I mean

What are they all even saying
In this cafe? It
Does not sound like a laugh—it
Sounds like Francesco
Is being daft. Is getting banned.
Remember when I got banned from everywhere haha.
Good job I have stanzas and
ASICS now—Novablast: fast! This? Crap. Caffe: not.

What a Man

Milan versus Hellas
Verona. What the hell is
Fast track access
Into football stadio? San

Siro, before it is demolished.
My trip is absolutely astonishing.
I do not know what "Hellas" means.
It's all Greek to me.

Modrić. Pulisic. Loftus-Cheek.
Ciao—erm… I think you may be in my sea…?
No. No that's fine: you are an ultra. Literally
€5 extra?! It is still astonishing; even

Though I do not know one Verona player. This
Italian toddler behind me on the train
It's getting admonished in a minute—he
Suddenly starts speaking English: finish! Yeah great

Strike; because I need a rhyme; and a new
Line—stanza—because I didn't enjoy that…
Finish: absolute rubbish. Terrible! Everyone
On the train is beautiful. Bellissimo! Better. Parma—

Ten stops to go. This train is slow.

This train is full. I wonder if anyone else is
Literally writing a literal load of bull, but in Italian?
Sì. Sì AC Milan. Massimiliano Allegri: what a man.

Until I've Had Enough

I run around Milan. I lie:
I run along the canal. I loop back
Down and around
To where I started, as usual. It is fascinating.
I am the proof of everything I think.
There are probably trolleys in there
Like there are everywhere
With busy, squeaky wheels
That go around and around the same
Aisles making a racket: the Metro

Map—fantastic. Orderly. It is easy to
Distract me by hurtling myself through a tunnel
With my eyes closed so I do not have to take any
Responsibility—poetically. Metaphorically.
What do I even mean
To me? Yada yada qualcosa Italian—no
Lesson being learnt today: I slip
And sink into the sludge. It's OK. I'm good. I'm used
To this guff. And I will swim in it until I've had enough.

Pericolo di Caduta

Ciao. Caffè, prego. Grazie. Arrivederci.
Ciao. Caffè, prego. Grazie. Arrivederci.
I float across the whole of Italy
Caffeinated beyond my wildest dreams.
I speak the language, it seems
To them—for six seconds. Then

They realise: "English, please, pal: I don't understand—
Je ne comprends pas. FUCK ermmmm… non
Capisco, I mean." They'd like me to leave, or buy
More than just coffee. I have been saying "bye"
Informally, for weeks—it says
On Reddit: ciao. I don't care. Non mi

Interessa. Arrest me. I am from a backwards
Little island in the middle of the sea
And I've had 6 of these naughty little fuckers today
Already. Stairs? To the terrazze? I fly
Up the Duomo di Milano. Is there anything that could
Stop me though? Sì. The queue literally on the roof.

Over, Over, Over, Over, Motions of the Soul

I train to Vinci

Crying at Smiths covers.
I change the poem. I let it pass.
You'd never know.
O we fucking know when you do don't we because

I change the poem. This is presence.
You know the thing you tell everyone to be all the fuck
I return
Again. I look at the view. I am
The view. River. Hill. Leonardo.

How did he embody so much emotion
In the Last Supper? Just desserts.
I press it because it hurts. I
Shout at you without adequate
Punctuation so it sounds absurd: when

Will I ever learn
To be a flying machine to get the fuck away from your
Atrocious poetry? O I don't know—something
About soil falling over
His head: tongue in cheek, apparently

A Few Pound

I run around Florence
Burning off my inheritance.
No—not that: skint.
You know what I mean: it's overwhelming

Is Florence. Too much for a poem.
I don't know where I'm going
When I'm running, abroad
Early doors: I take my phone: how

Do I get away
From that—that river? That trench.
Because my bed's the other way!
Yeah. Yeah I made it. Hence

I am able to stay
In a completely different place
Inside my brain: Michelangelo's
David! Insane. Can't relate. What

Do you mean: it looks nothing like me!
You know what I mean. Too much for a poem.
When I get in a flow I can't stop
Going and did these banks ever overflow? Burst

No thanks. No I don't want nothing from you—
Fuck off. O! A souvenir? It's still a no: I don't
Want to remember nowt. Though forgetting

Is still costing a few pound.

Leonardo da Vinci

We aren't sure
Where he grew up—doesn't
Matter anymore: check out the muscles in this leg.
Yeah the drawings
For the books
He never completed. Yeah he hardly ever finished a

Yeah it probably stems from that. The eyes:
Windows to the

Empty. Yeah he hardly ever finished a

Mona Lisa. Yeah she isn't looking at the viewer: empty
Claim, I was saying. Straight through ya.
Full of shame? I doubt it. Though it did

Rhyme.
O I don't fucking know do I—something
About the soul. And true feelings.

Hardly wrote about himself though: you're right. Mostly
Mirror-image cursive too.

Leonardo da Vinci II

I mean, Mohammed bin Salman
Bought *Salvator Mundi*
For four hundred and fifty million
Dollars. I mean, the UAE government did. It's
Not been seen since. He is also the chairman
Of PIF. They own Newcastle United. Alan Shearer
Was absolutely delighted. I am in a queue

To see *David*
Before it ends up on someone's table
In the Middle East. I mean what happened
To the feet? I am inside—he is
Looking at me. What the fuck is tha- O—
It's a sling. Like that'd do anything against the UAE! I
Turn into a new wing: hundreds

Of stone heads, all dead. Nymph. Nymph.
Nymph with Snake. Oedipus! Narcissus!
Can't relate. "Ideal female head"? I'm not
Touching that. I'm not! What a Tos-
Ini. Cristofori. Created the piano. What
Has any of this got to do with Leonardo
Da Vinci? I am more and more lost

In galleries. Poetry. Galleries. Uffizi! Better than
The office, at least. Botticelli! Caravaggio!
Venus. Medusa. I have a habit
Of picking the wrong one
And turning to stone. Fun though! Leo
Wouldn't know. Literally 260 goals
In the Premier League—which

Will have a game in Dubai
Soon. Bargello, next, soon—break. Café. I
Zoom! Cake! Quiche! Where is this from?
Da dove? ¿De donde? D'où? Loadsa
Chinese in here. 从哪里? Alreet, pet!
A melting pot emerges
Of which the future purchases. While

The poet continues researching
Cannon fodder for the poem
As he stands at a distance—from *The Fisher Boy*.
Il Pescatore. Wrangling with a catch, both
Ears pierced. Vincenzo Gemito. In a bit
O: two more floors, one more line
And one more stanza to go—fishing

Kid: put it back! Let it go. *Dying*
Adonis—another Vincenzo. It is as if they all know. It's
As if all goes: Leonardo! It's New Year's Eve!
Am I really going to leave
It as seven sevens? Why do they preserve—include—
Most of this tat? It couldn't stop attack
Attack attack. I have just now entered La Sala Islamica.

I mean! There is more to pack in
From the top floor. Armour! Swords! Ottoman chain-
Mail: phwoar. All into the extra stanza
Of a liar: Leonardo? In here? He's wrestling
With everything in this room—Hercules. Ercole. If only
I was a Medici. I wouldn't then be writing so cheekily!
Ash—just wait for the Uffizi: there'll

Be something in there by me. UAE. David
Ginola yada yada: queuing fodder. Could it
Go any slower—existence? Art doesn't
Make it easier. Having money would—buying
Civilisation'd be amazing. It's moving!
It's not. Scusi—what is your time slot? "Time
Is an illusion. And remembrance should stop." She

Is unbelievably hot. What a painting!
Looks like photoshop. I mean—what a shot!: Al
Nearly broke the net! That fisher kid'll be mad.
Goliath though? Dead. The monsters of history
Going. New ones? Growing. The queue is

Disappearing! I am entering the museum!
It is like a fucking airport. Macchina volante.

Form An Orderly Queue

"It is boring that you are frightened
you are boring me by being interested in me.

In trying to be interesting,
you are very boring."
—R. D. Laing, Knots

You are so funny, mister [slaps my bottom]. I'd like to hang out at your house ;)

*

(Two days later)

Mister. O sir! My boyfriend pushed me!

(Text message, three hours later)

Thank you for listening to me today. I really appreciate it.

*

(Five days later)

I'm in a mood, *sir*. And I actually pushed my boyfriend first.
I was with him last night and we cooked together and had amazing sex.

O but sir. Daddy! Haven't I got a great ass?

"My knot is finally finished, and it is a great disappointment. What a waste of time."
—M.C. Escher in a letter to his son, George

"What's the matter, baby? Can you believe this? After all this, she wants to go back on that ride."
—Janice Soprano, The Sopranos, *'The Ride'*

Going Without

This. That.
Anything
Not to think about it. Travel.
Art. Silliness.
Fart.
Not having to confirm you do not like football
Every few days. Letting
It pass
In a haze. Rhyme.
Spending time. Spending. Mending
Just enough

To go forward. Opening
The cupboard and thinking, You know
What? I can go without today.

Sewage

Oh dear. O no.
I am being taken over by some kind of flow.
It went away a little while ago. O
I don't know. Sometimes things can just slow
Down. Didn't take you long to frown
Did it! Even though it wasn't me that did it.
I didn't do it. I did do it.
That is how you write it

Only you wouldn't know it.
Wetherspoons is the place of my revival. Its' revival.
It is not an act of survival.
It's tidal! It is full of sewage—exactly.
My name isn't Ashley.
It's poetry.
You wouldn't know it: yeah, fair enough.
Since my mother's muff, actually.

Dust Gizmo

...There they are! And so my poetics are
My metaphysics or was it vice
Versa? The crust of the pie
At best, becomes... the... baker...?
'Tis one a dem new sprinkling gadgets.
I said, it is one of them new
Sprinkling gadgets. I sound
Fuzzy right—that's what I thought you said.
No I did. I diddddd-a! No I have something
In my eye that cannot be categorised
In the old language—god. Dur brain.

I sold... I gave away samples
Of the filling, foil, pastry,
Crust, baker(s) for a timeless
Age?! Haha—this stuff, eh? Only I
Wasn't giving it away. Yeah one o' new dust gizmo.

Giver of Eternal Youth

"How I had been singled out to fill this post deserves some small speculation. ...it seems logical that I was singled out for other, far less poetic reasons."
—J. D. Salinger, 'Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters'

What is one to do with this epigraph
Other than raise high the roof beam it has
Given me within its very foundation to make

It then a part of the foundation of this structure
As well and then a metaphor for further also.

Jesus was a “tekton”—builder. Craftsman.
Did he know where he was going? Would he know
In a poem? But it said “carpenter” in the title, mate.
And I suppose I am building a home, of sorts—which
No one is allowed in; and I appear

To want it that way. I mean!—I have been picked
By Apollo to do this! Or Bragi! Much depends on the
Mythology. Iðunn was Bragi’s wife. Strewth! Loki
Turned her into a nut: I am going back to my book.

“One can almost always ferret out predecessors for any thought.”
—Nassim Nicholas Taleb, The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable

I Know

Up here, like millions of ants
Through a window. Really?! Exercise
Is what you need, not this. Salt

Ah—maybe not: they went around it. Fucks.
Shocking! The ants
Did offer me themselves, and so I remain

Dedicated: they nest
Wherever and however they want quite subtly
At times, causing

A nuisance. Are they pointless? Evidently
Not, window cleaner. Window
Shopper. Bargain hunter!: you have won

An *ant*! Yes it is a tiny, tiny
Prize and I hate to say it, but you’ll keep it, I know.

“Only now is the child finally divested of all that he has been”
—*Cormac McCarthy,* Blood Meridian, Or, the Evening Redness in the West

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