

in transit

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T.B.

Alive in parts of this century: Eric Mottram at 70, North & South

As You Were, Poetical Histories (Peter Riley)

Binding Affinities, Oasis (Ian Robinson)

Cable, Short Run (Kelvin Corcoran)

Catgut & Blossom: Jonathan Williams at 60, Coracle

A Dog's Nose, Taxus

A Gathering for Gael Turnbull, Au Quai

Louis Zukofsky, or whoever someone thought he was, North & South

The New British Poetry, Paladin

News for the Ear: a Homage to Roy Fisher, Stride

Onsets, The Gig (Nate Dorward)

Other: British and Irish Poetry since 1970, Wesleyan UP

Scrins, Pig (Ric & Ann Caddel)

Three Part Invention and Other Scored Occasions, West House Books (Alan Halsey)

To Whom It May Concern, Orcombe (Tony Lopez)

Valdeez, Minimal Missive (Gael Turnbull)

CCCP; Critical Quarterly; Fragmente; Formcards; Gare du Nord; Giants Play Well In The Drizzle; The Gig; Gutcult; Kite; New American Writing; Ninth Decade; Le Nouveau Recueil; The Paper; *La Poésie Dans l'Enseignement de l'Anglais* (Univ. de Lyon); West Coast Line.

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#17

code
of pollen-milk
spilt night-hiss a small

fragment of the spectacles Salvador
Allende wore the day
La Moneda fell

all that's left mobile hearing
Kirsty skipping back from school
a social

folly to imagine peaceable
evolution people never have nor
wild horses wouldn't

such extent love has dark
matter missing hope
a tern's

beak pointed to the ocean human
genome how we live
into other

lives legible plants fishes warmth
impossible to be wise
after the event we are

here dear whisper
us, plural, the
vast star-mash

*

YOU TELL ME

Hawkmoth the size of a little
pipistrelle found its way in
the house late last night. Two
fish today the colour of lucozade
bought from CityZoo *glissent*
through the ox-
ygenating weeds. “What
do you think fish *do*
all day”? Backhanders
head the news at the highest
level nobody’s willing to say
– *parsley* – amongst
light bright this morning
as a cufflink. Consult
the screen & try to imagine
what language this is
I’m living in– Cyrillic Wolf
Advance to Level 4
Vous avez peut être
un problème
avec votre navigateur specially
enriched now a smattering
of cirrus has taken
off the heat. Walked
in the night looking
for glow-worms, found
sparks glimmering
on an electric fence, stars’
names long clued-up since
forgotten like lit
chips in bitumen. “Look,
the dark is looking at my shoes”.
I accept much
of what you say but not

*your equation
of us, users
of language (and so
by analogy a
source of your
“genomic variation”)
with the same phenomenon in nature. Mutational
procedures don’t need a source – they happen...
we make up & are made up
in language in ways similar – though obviously not identical –
to Darwinian mechanisms & have much less control
on them than we think.*

Swift-wing-arcs gone
from the church tower a cat’s
cradle of *formes automatiques*,
metaphor-shovel instead
of usher to bits pieced
into fragmented space.

*During her last illness
my sister asked me
to write a poem that
she could understand. I
tried, and failed. On banks
of green wondering how
& talking it through aloud.*

**You have performed
an illegal
operation,** dying
to say things
otherwise to see them
vertiginous rinsed
nebulæ you can’t count
on being there or anywhere
spiralling, “whose
fingers &

whose toes.”

The hawkmoth was

dead in the morning
Agrilus convolvuli (?) bulked
out on the concrete floor.
Guinea pigs whistle & squeak
make *crottes* like perfectly
stretched applepips. *Dénué*
de scrupules, Bardik
le Voleur
n'hésite pas un instant
à se mêler des affaires
les plus louches. Sonar
clicks seas'
following
on from what you say
a mesh of flares, pressures
to communicate distress &/
or pleasure. A restless
 motility
lights the way to/
 plankton
behind the lines
 beneath
the trees embed voices mute
thought-formats in an established
order approaching
like a westerly head-fizz
out of
oceans of phosphorescence.
Make shopping list, feed
fish. Bardik,
meet hand, hand
meet Bardik, Bardik
and hand, meet feet
 “whose–

Trip it lightly o'er the fells.

kiss-struck o' the sun-o the
patterns
o' the sun
fallen
on a tuffeau wall:
fine

thin rains seep
don't soak
along the stone's
veins
gives the same result.
Imagining Neruda under
seize of *palabras* as a state
a people could be founded in
meanings spoken out
of the urgency now is
full of & unsecured
into space : *this*
pen doesn't
work, it
would be mere
public
address to say that
here, thirteen
route de Saumur next
to the tractor shop by the common
language-canteen whose
choice of menu is a means
itself to redo a previous
undo operation—
El pueblo, unido—
“I tried & failed”—

Thrashings
of a moth's wing.

of popping
pistachio shells as
fish-lips
smack the tank
for food or air (?)
an easy patter.
One day's too gloomy
to switch off the lights,
the next's
bristly mouthwash,
fine tunes the treelines
& near gladioli daubs.
Please swap with
the person next to you.
“Our thoughts to you”
“One time I repaired a fish....”
“I would like to chatterbox
in English...”, sd the wren,
supplied
de fonctions directes,
recombinant
at the sign of
chemistries
trilling ambience
on a noise-bender: “all
our friends /
make love /
possible”—source
that,
source
that source, Bardik. Bardik
meet nature, nature
meet tinker, tailor, quite
naked without a switch card.
Just breathing on the hammock
of its web sent the spider
on the instant to the corner

above the toilet where we keep
obituaries from the Guardian
in a box, philosopher,
 social reformer, bargeman
jazz trumpeter, footballer, Breton nationalist,
Admiral of the Fleet, nurse, criminal (& writer), book-
lover, philanthropist, soldier, urban designer, tap
 dancer
 for
 yes &
 twice for
 all the rest—

The dead
in their life-
boat have us
by our daily
bread & host.
Holy day, hal-i-day
of thorns in her lap lay
slain cruelly
for to say
her mother and her lullaby.
Eliane came,
signed her card “your
french grandmother”, exchanged
vous for *tu*, all afternoon
talked the breeze warm like
cooled thermos-coffee. Uppermost
in the ear the mind
 bent to lip
read a drift less
than intent you
don’t say it might
be a geography of
souls hold-
ing out for

a way to think
that escapes *to*
east and west
among skittled bones.
Lines and veins
have us by the skin
of the teeth, tongue
clicks
torque
turns
on a cord
of such sisterliness it
twists the night
to a fist
of wet cobblestones—
This mess of possessives—
As if the dead
clawed us
to a past
owner-occupied (change
that to “think
of Maurice
in his shed” in
a mosaic
of accents
& rewritings.)
Bardik, take the wheel, I’ve
had enough of all this
language as a burial
site you buy into
like some talking
head in an automatic
response unit.
Why do I ever
write anything? For
the people words
turn into, the *they*

they become best
before end Mr
Kipling pastry
mix noone
cd copy the texture of
even if they wanted (?)—
 Or to track
that liberty I *lately*
thought to
take the shape of
 the wake/

the Pride
of Portsmouth makes
in the approaches
to Le Havre extempore
laws making surf-forms
from displaced
opals a thrown
applecore slips through
without a second thought.
Ship's
 log, no
doggo
 cargo
of post-
hoc ad-
 hic
jacet life
jacketlessness /
“to a world that has no need of us” /
“curiosity and delight”/
on the logic-
scoop-wheel that
the gulls croup
back a grammar from
 to inspect the sky with.

*And what is exciting
is the recent
realisation of the phenomenon
of lateral gene transfer. That is, where
genes are transferred from one species to another, and where those genes
actually function in the new host and become part of its evolutionary
history. Thus one may not be able to trace the evolutionary lineage of an
organism as if you can trace a single pathway, but only of its individual
genes – they have a
variety of lineages.*

Please enter

your social
security
number here.

Clandestine

access
will disappear
in a week

or two. Do you
wish

to connect

yes ?
no ? I enclose
leaflet

I

hope / will / will
will send

please quote
(the old
peoples'

bus arriving
in the square low
chatter & motor no
metaphor the
service

required – eat
soup
tonight – yes
will / will / wish
nourish
us, yes
please

connect

*

A wasp's wing-pitch buzzes
heavier than a fly's, *scotches*
to the glass means
business, the next
best guess's a nest question
mark that & folks then
glance the walls suggest
pest-control or the Spanish
Inquisition. Drew
Leni Riefenstahl from
the obituary pile, wrote
“the world's shampoo” (?).
Blind athletes career,
weird-shackling– “*but bear is*
cold”– of luminous
limbs & Reich. Liam's
homework to find
three words in Latin
whose roots
walk
the corner
where four men were in the café drinking at a table by the baby-foot
couldn't see in or out for
condensation
on the glass, he

chose:

ambulatio

and drew an arrow off
for '*somnambulatoire*',
'*ambulance*', &
'ramble'. **Infelix**

ego

think
of a number re-
mem-
ber bracken
in North Wales
breaking like corn
flakes brittle
metal in the cold-
ness underfoot.

A song
(Monk)
the sum
total
of all
the wrong
notes
re-
arranged in
their own
good time.

Two men

thrown
from a tenement
roof in Palestine
for having taken
a wrong
turning,
crucible // nightingale // residue
"often it is only a sound in the pipes"
pebble-ripples

of a moral
choosing returning
from the leprous plague of war
unable to come to
any conclusion, not
saturday, the 27th
today in
tongues of fire not
my words our
fathers'
fathers tombola
of unidentifiable small plastic things
on this tabletop it will
stop at nothing "look
at this
I've a toothpaste
beard"– an
interplay
between vertically
derived and
horizontally
acquired words
responsible
for
where
the buck
stops:

my words.

*Look across the open sill
our children are
the air
blown fresh from off the green estates
on death's wall-less bill.*

Timor mortis conturbat me.

Mother,
whose fingers
and whose toes
bequeath
grief to
a goldfinch
lit
upon a nearby bush.

*

Star-beaten , desert-mast

*

*Thus 'us
the users of language'
is a form of code
really for a host
of lineages, a speech
species of rearrangement out of iff
ancestral fishes & grasses we can confidently
expect to turn
into a variant of (?)*

*

“Have taken the kids to Hyper-U”

*

Pass any *vigneron's*
gates & the autumn air
succumbs to a mulch

of grapes' soft rot
& fermented remnants
spattered on mud-tracks
or dumped at cut
field-ends for compost.
Breath's liquid fills
the fingers like a Flanagan
phrase a few million
years back would've
flapped gills
to gulp it down.

Against the wind
 & rain
from the boot
 of a car

a woman
in black takes a pot
of chrysanthemums
& heads
for the cemetery—
should All Souls
be forgot—
lays her
ensemble of
reds & yellows.

*The hope is
of hundreds of billions
of brain
cells to find faults
in this signaling
to account for disorders
in the histology of
English (Irish) English
(Phillipino) English
lovely as a fishmonger's whiskered dead pink fish.*

You enter the vault
& Lips-lady swims
should you accept it
to recur in
the tongue-loops
restock them
with cod
on level 8
which means
a performed
silence exchanged
between different
domains
of life utterly
dependant
upon the company
we keep
after which the
ingredients
undergo
a change
& the pancakes
are a halibut
galliard
ready to eat or
not you tell me.

*

Noirmoutier, nov.:

The island, separated from what the signposts call ‘The Continent’ by a strait a few hundred metres wide, is almost entirely absentee landlorded. Not one in ten houses seem to have their shutters open; nearly all to the south of the island appear to have been built in the last twenty five years – whitewashed *parpaing* rows, holding to

the only likely strip of constructible ground between dunes and saltmarsh. Shut campings out of season not knowing what they are any more – a row of flagpoles with no flags – the concrete tracks and weary paint on the tunnels of a miniature golf course choked with leaves.

Finished Papandreou's lovely book, documentary folded so thoroughly into narrative that it reads as a tale that might be as old as the myths the way he tells it. "The Greek language has no word for 'privacy', except for the word 'idiotes', which means private citizen, the one who is not interested in society and not involved in politics". It recalled Zambaras' house – the spontaneous 10 o'clock breakfast, his grandmother in the kitchen, the sense of incorporation into a family for half a morning. Maybe we had been invited, I forget, but by virtue of being there you felt you were acknowledged. Presence meant belonging – it seemed unlike the sort of space a north European soul might have created around itself – something personal that you need inviting into and could risk invading. At Zambaras' house, like the olive trees, we were there, and so by definition it was, for that time being, where we were.

Saturday we walked the beach northwards, masses of sloe-coloured clouds heaping up on the horizon etched hard and straight, the sea chalk green-grey under a steady wind – from time to time slats of sun slicing through and turning the sky brilliantly black. A German gun emplacement toppled into the sand below what must be the limit of the highest tides, tall (20' or more) and intact still, with rusted runners inside bearing hooks like a butcher's shop. It had collapsed so thoroughly that the gun-openings from within gave a view mainly on the land they were once meant to defend – the interior walls spray-painted with phrases and names, barely legible.

Sunday brought a storm. Tried walking the other way, southwards along the beach but it was nearly impossible. Shrank inside protective gear, even shouting above the wind and noise of the sea we could scarcely communicate. You could see about 300 metres

before the outlines of things smeared into a charcoaly weave of indistinct silhouettes. On the slipway and stranded on the sand were dozens of Portugese men of war, little bean bags of jelly

mint blue in the weed-heaps &
clogged about the cartilage
of a cuttlebone. Remembered
Brahms' *ist as wie grass*
(again) maybe the mortal
march is good to grit
the teeth with, friends
and friends' elegies *sans*

pompe

against the breviary
of a storm's
brute rhythms to make small
human *gestes* ample
fodder out of damage (?)
"I loved him
for shating" "my skin".

Marram

slashed sideways
chromosomes
someone also trying to walk
headdown a bit
of painted wood (boat-panel?)
Cretan blue & speech-
lessly so. Wheels
of dessicated *Eryngium*
spun by like uncontrollable
clockwork in a fistfight
with the wind

 "whose
fingers &
 whose toes"—

idiotic

#1

(In Time of the Uniting of Nations)

Along the axis marked x
are certain definite quantities .

We know this .

That the table will likely collapse
if the wooden plugs
are allowed to loosen .

In fact it has been proven .

Milky morning light .

For the children are collateral
& the sounds of their playing come rolling in across the hills
& that is all very well

#2

america shamerica le pavé
de l'Erica fifteen
men in transit
for the price
of a camscope ending
his days saturated
in fats spread easily
through the ached
crevices
in the global lyric hospice

#3

—never made the recording & regret it. By
the sidegate hemlock
water dropwort in slack ditchwater the nearest
equivalent round here, sluiced
choices.

It is an intricate
dance he said & it's
a wonder who makes it tick can't
always be an active step , tick
untick
remember
the password the dialogue
box always

Remember walking the beach half
the city's rubbish tossed back by the tide

Three miles southwards to the old power station towers

Telltale tesserae
of sanderling legs searching the sea's
edge torn
instructions we turn to ,
migrant , *in the presence of*

A Portrait of the Present Tense

*the food/
of succession/
facing out/*

onto vineyards, tree-islands, the house
they've been building for months now en face:

is it the site that grows sparse
with articulation, like bones humped over forked
lines in a mesh of veination, moth
wing, pylon
rows, pulsing
tracts that the eyes
go down for bearing ? as if history
was calling from its field saying 'next, next' & I
in soiled fidelity were looking for the right door
saying 'coming, coming, just let me finish the washing up',
ill-caulked against the plotless
greetings of the twins pruning with their secateurs
beneath a great fool of sun. It folds out
in a nutritive deckchair of misalignments
limb on limb, at least mention
lifting one more crop of versions from its loam seams,
an occupying presence delivered in
regular shipments by the lorryload from Juigné or ushered
up easy
as a Louis
 Napoleon ten centimes
 picked up in mid-path.

Disc,
date-offal,
a fall-back position the personal
form is buried in,
north-south
paysage of bitten
sound & aggregate.

Dolmen,
home to mites
& mint-wrappers.

What disc ? (nothing
in the post today
but publicity) grave-
good clipped
to creaking ankles like a morris
bell of slung being
head to South facing East but face turned upwards
rifling the noises as they crack
into evidence of the sunk ruts
that you & I
are in the wake of, transhumant
pronouns on bikes bumping across a flood plain
amongst maize leaves stiff end of season rustling
that I make head or tail of & fancy Orphic like almost any
reed or brick might

be spiked
& kitted
along the way
of the living and constellated dead.

Parsley

*You speak amongst the sounds of things I hear no more.
Normally of course who'd ever guess the yachts*

*that sail the air – the snatched wakes
& links
they navigate between. Ah Ric, we*

*is the strangest sea.
I listen to this room. It isn't how it was before.*

26.06.03

#4

coming up for air the bare
necessity's lithe

atness

at

three removes the two

halves "here, have

some" Malaga

like sherry

on the rocks of island

selves that fall

clean

apart upon the table

some

coffee

stains & peeled orange

#5

(Cambridge)

lust for all that endless vista

of unpeopled dustiness coming in

off the Urals on pollard willows ,

backwater slacks , a Passion

by Schutz whose recits sounded crabbed ,

in unum Deum , some world or other

you pull the wool on like an escapee

amongst a hundred lodes & clayey solid

#6

(Lowestoft)

echoed surf from off the Ness the furthest
easterly point in Britain & beyond
that the shoals

reached only in the head
land's reaching out
to the waters out beyond that sound

*

applied science

for Gael

any moment borders on
the next resists
the scalpel oh
we could join them up
& blather on about
Edinburgh in the festival
season I suppose thoughts
stupid to think them a sort
of headgear to wear
against the cold
north air wings
in anyway & we
shall have plenty
talk enough

Near Currie Kirk

("a remarkable & kindly man".)

sheep at the begies in the gear meaning
darkening by the minute down
to a few hundred yards or maybe less
than meaning Hills
sunk right off the globe's edge take
me to the cleaners for a soaked football shirt , grave
token of utter
care , & the uselessness of it rolls the heart-
boulder beneath a sea that any second now
this place might turn into , a conversation
we never had "what
thou lov'st well" , the rest ,
I never did like "dross" , would've
said god knows persistence isn't a choice
of words we run to what matters most finds
us out along the twisted lines of drystone walls ,
a reused stamp or air-
fix model plane tilted up
into the late October mist , remnant
tenders we turn our backs on and return
to thinking of your "threads"/
"unwindings" , the connective
tissues silence
shifts

out across these foothill moors :

the island-signs :

bronchitic
sheep-coughings and traffic
far off now on the road through Currie .

Le batterie inédit de M. François Merville

that was then,
 when,
 now &
well how then *click*
thumb (right) cover
 drum with towel
 some day my prince'll stuff
 cloth in the early Pleistocene
 cough (left) click (left) soft
 as klafoutis with
a fishfin flaked in mud & thin plastic plate
rattled like a Zappa-sophist near the limit of
a kind of speech, see date on base (*click*)

*

Hymn

(for Roy Fisher)

At the rim is all the rest
the earth can bring to burthen.
No time to be asking what
it's doing or where

its doing's going. Sun
a gong, gone done & swung
its darkening face across the hill
crest's edge, augmented

to inaudibility. The millionth
fossilshell
will go on nursing hiss
like whatever that slick

liquid is
in the comfrey bin, a distillation
out of mulch of something turning
slowly tonic.

“two months work to poise 4 million coloured blocks”

“It’s domino
day”– Einstein
resembles

Georges
Brassens with
a pipe – some

connections
fail to work &
several

people weep – Pepys
walks on
a heap of Dutch

plunder, 16-
61, spices
pepper

packed so tight that –
do
you suffer from

hair loss (cross
yes to that) – a
prize

sight Mr Pepis
didn’t
seek

to seize given
what was happening behind his back/

& when

Actu arrives this morning there's this picture of Clemen-
ceau inspecting the trenches in about 1916, upright, stick,
moustache, serious but looking like the sort of uncle who'd
give you toffees & opposite him's a row of uniform-heaps that
look like what they are, & he, & it,

& the toaster's

up,

we're

looking &

stop &

stop &

we all .

fall .

down .

As You Were

(i.m. Chris Roberts)

I come to you in all
innocence and know full well
it is a cover from which

there's no recovery any more
or less plausible than this some
time early evening falling

readily to hand
The Penguin History of the World
it smells faintly papery

& Irish men in small parties
very earnestly are calling
to one another with familiar names

you said *it is good*
to hold someone else thinking
no doubt of a friend who is ill

in England and may not live
till Xmas it seems
only yesterday we were talking

as a tiny lizard crossed the sill
& you wanted me to see its singularity
set ringing like a handbell

*

I come to you in partial
shadow where the walnuts fall
you croppy boys with rum daddles

penurious wives begging innesence of all
things in which complicity rides up
a scunnered web of noisy-racket men drag

sneaks & sawney-hunters, their vnhappie
lot going down the veins into the smell
of onions cooking in the morning which isn't

especially appealing right now though
it's early, or, no, as you were, a flotilla
of tidal hulks moored out upon the large

and hungry mass of brilliant autumn light
clattering among the chestnut trees
like Gainsborough at forty yards

& I turned my face and was desir'd
to turn again and look into that face, no
surely, time makes nothing well, well

almost nothing, Tom, who wanted me to see
the tree-bell bark had grown around to still
& sink into our flanks like crossfire

*

They come to me in squalls
from another latitude their Gaelic
words cross-hatched with gouttes of rain

no beneficence in that, just a shower
this time at summer's promised end, a coil
of images, heated by resistance, the seed

plumes of severed cells blown by
on a chair the definitive collection
of Sting songs and I think it was

Serge Gainsbourg wrote this one, my fond
hopes looped over the least packet of horizon,
blackthorn scrub & oak in slabs amongst the head

lights of a car behind, just let him pass,
& be merciful unto them, O Lord, & deliver me,
sons & daughters of people whose sons

& daughters these each are, calling back
& forth from their pitched
black vermined holds, as our car

goes into a wall of dark & keeps on going in
to you, Tom Stephenson, your voice hauling up
with the familiar sullen kindness of a bellbuoy

*

They come to us as sentinels
along the borders of a Japanese lake
abandoned in the 40s, rivulets

feeding in over mossy stones and pools
a panel explains are symbols reclaimed
for the visitor from the murrain

of recent years, the genetic causeway
swallowed whole, timeless, as a white owl
heaves from its field at a warning light

which makes us stop & look beneath the bonnet
with a torch at the sumps & hot metal
of a contracting system, sitting there

in its casing, refusing to account
for itself, as solidly in the dark as we
are singly in passing

that meridian of shuttered windows answerable
to ourselves another generation, whose role
call of exiled souls is foundering

somewhere between the vineyard files, John Woolley,
Thomas Holden, James Grove, Helen Guild, come
to the toll of a long gone midnight world

*

You come to me as real
rain prowls the city blocks
away to the right, its plumes

trailing off into a realm of things
it's meaningless to describe, the cloud
black enough it could swallow

the place wholly *I would like*
to reply but the treatment
leaves me completely knackered

so be it the islands left astern
it being impossible
that we should put in

to you, away down the walkways
of history the poplars
address themselves, not in collusion

or some false affect of community
crested in a cascade of tickertape
for lost events, though they launch

themselves upon a coast of pain & love
whose cursive script you could run against
in the dumb aftermath of almost any resonance

*

Binding Affinities

“...brute force (the world’s greatest idiot) has never kept the germ from its divine order. A black eye never reformed a drunkard, a czar never stopped a free thought.”

—Charles Ives

(Le passage, Morbihan)

is an assemblage

of some kind

swept

like marshgrass through a fissure in

call it mind

if you will

it’s surely tidal

whatever the subject

or its encroachments, the mud sister mud

something that has gone out on the estuarine levels
returns, raucous

into the face of it, the human

portion a heron rises over, slow dominion

of slewed stakes,
 hulls,
 their refusal, borne
out along the margins
 to test the burdens
displaced by sheer persistence

O Lord
I wanna cross over, let me
cross over into campground

*

Playing that old
tape of Ives'
voice roaring hell
at the stars
& stripes "they'll
be there" in
a demolition
of tones ground
to a swelling
after truth he
might've been demobbed
into bearing up
beneath the strain of:
a storm trooper
in his 70s smashing
at the agents
of imperialism

with his left
fist in a pulp
of bass harmonics
whose dense
remnants ring the ear—

What he
could've meant
it
was a fire
breathing
closer, the
brush
of an angel's
wings, as
how he
meant it

is a fire
unfurled
among the buttresses
of a fervour
nursed
against any
form of torpor—

To be a city in
solitary, a
thoroughfare, worn
steps in stone hollowed
from treading on
along the years'

voices thrown
down the World

Service hiss of static – Flemish Spanish
index shifts a few points the Redsox piled
up yesterday on Central European Time
among the tumbings of a cembalom
backing something tzigane-ish into the drink
drive limits in Norway “but Hannah
in Frankfurt, I think
it is different, no ?”

All night
the radio
 wavers somewhere
 between my ears .

O Lord, I want to cross over .

And a hunched
 figure
comes walking
 across the Chechin
snow, his back
 to the camera
whose voice is pouring
 off the silent hills
& veins,
 cascading
down the genepool .

*

(La Bohalle, Maine et Loire)

Deep river slow river
rivers I have known

motherless & homeless *in nox*
surgit the confederacy

of voice is a place
I don't wish to be a tourist

in sometimes simply to relate
how it feels "dear friends,

weather's good, yesterday
we climbed a mountain

& today" the sandbanks bake
in midstream they look

like land though actually
they're often floating beneath

is water you look over
to a churchtower & you look

over there where the grass is
carbon & amino acids...

...& on the other side
the youths of La Bohalle
hang around a handful
of girls pulling at the willowleaves

as they do wheelies on their mobilettes
& the revs
race across the water the

nearly silent

kilometre of water that lies between

*

pestel & mortar .
prised open oystershell .

Stuff that stinks
black with nutrients

the bird
hosts are feasting on .

So haul away boys:
you are entering
an international
construction zone—

Tide whistling
in the blistered

silts: hands
thrust deep in

the pockets
of a greatcoat .

*

(voice 1)

(voice 2)

a long long way
my soul is

including property
in section two

haul away boys & bring her down

a friend & what
my soul is

financial tips
at the touch of

haul away boys & bring her down

hill & cithern
us a song

thinking big
including property

haul away boys & bring her down

Jesus, Moses
us a song

said the wren
make their priority

haul away boys & bring her down

*

No czar ever prevented a free thought
from getting under the eaves and billowing
with the aired sheets the way Ives fought

it the rules resulted in the question following
a heron's flight overlapping with the sort
of thing Jackie's always saying allowing

for the fact that anything he says is hard
to follow & usually involves francs for a bet
so people say or he's attempting to shepherd

himself onto the back seat – if he can get
a car to stop – by walking up the road toward
whatever's coming & laying down at the feet

& beak of such need as is near the limit
of intent, for there has to be some agreement
since what's understood is mostly not what's meant

by understanding, & one figure's smallness is like
no other who is walking off through the same snow
amongst tenements whose roofs have been

blown away, their walls chalk cliffs looking
like they look like so unsteadily any minute
almost from this distance that they might go.

*

(Pointe du Raz, Finistère)

is an assemblage

of some kind

off limits

& broken

open by the weather. The thing
you notice most in the approach is

sky

has too much height to live with

its pattern

of whitewashed second homes & well
marked car parks pushing out
towards a western edge surfing
in on howdy doody country lyrics *I bin
travelling so bring me home
roads, where I belong*

whose skies

have too much length

to live with

their broken patterns

behind the wipers a headland

occluded by rain two campervans

we watch up & go across the gorse-

heath exits where any road

runs inland

including properties

that hardly touch

the ground a perch remaining
face-out & shuttered, battered
maybe 40 weeks a year
in thorn
scrub, rubbles
a chapel

locked at 5 pm., though the sanctuary
light is burning red
in its glass-shield still...

*: O lord, let me
cross over
God's children,
let me walk there*

in single
weal or

else
in the neck

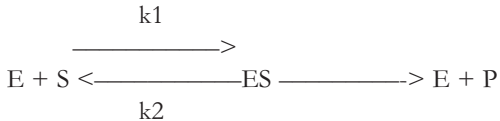
to reckon
with it common

place
as a perished wall .

*

NOTE:

“The phrase ‘binding affinity’ is used to describe the strength with which an enzyme binds its substrate. An enzyme is a protein catalyst that, by definition, speeds up the rate at which a chemical process occurs. To do this, it binds the reactants (substrates, S), which are then converted to products (P) that in turn are released and the enzyme is then free to bind more substrate:



where E is free enzyme, ES is the enzyme-substrate complex, and EP the enzyme-product complex. Thus binding affinity is defined in terms of the binding constants (k) and is a function of the ratio k1: k2. The higher this ratio, the greater is the binding affinity of E for S, and the further towards ES lies the equilibrium position of
E + S \rightleftharpoons ES.”

–Michael J Danson

“All music’s folk music. Leastways, I ain’t never heard a hoss make it.”

–Louis Armstrong

#7

(child song event)

come then, you & I,
let's be trout—
 & to hell
with the truth can
go hang itself
 from its sky-hook

*

#8

(for Liz)

*after the flood each hedge has its
wickerwork of debris mainly old
maïs stalks & branches wedged twenty*

*years talking wondering
if I get your drift making
love a level*

*weave this match-
work that*

other

Before your eyes

(to Lewis Jones)

Walk the shore figuring mammoth proxies.
Seal dance on an unseen skerry. Names

are the advance guard sent
to co-ordinate the ferrying of equipment

in an arena where the maps are
drawn bumping behind. A stick

to hear birds with, eat, find
love, make

forms of being in another
man's daylight. So much talk

to take directions
from the conflict of whatever

you say the eye is the voice
too is tidal, brackish

a struggler out in the backwash
like a foundling

song shot
from the spit in your river's mouth

*

the details

Occasionally

tyres crump on the ice-crusted road
outside, the singular/

sin nombre they

And the tread of words
is no less a mass
of noise lost in alertness
to the inalienable season/

The late Emil
Gilels on the radio
giving hell to
Scriabin's glitt'ry clusters

step by step, the fingers
& the cars

—a listening out for
what they occasion.
And the tread of winter
across the glass
is no less, walking
in, walking
in her breathless frosty moccasins

Elegy for Paul in exchange for his good humours

in the swing
of a door the
possible
to say no
more than
that
it jams to
want a thing
too bad the
lines
resist it to
put the shoulder
to fling the
thing open
ing dark
ly as G
minor in
Mozart's strings you
knew could
hold a
moment pushing
up through
& through the
way the back
passage fills with
leaves come
winter then
gone
another
season restive
to hold with that
restive tone like the English
Channel churned
green
pigeons
pipes

crawling on
the backwalls
of posh sea
front hotels sad
& funny Paul the
things we
say be
reft of meaning
to say all & no
more
possibly
walking where
pebbles
have thrown one way
another it
doesn't work
to
have a hundred
cuffs to
play off any as
there are many
waters there
are days
can't divide the
line from
the tune in
another part
a gull
slewed
overhead in
to the crowd
lost
but
the image burns &
to hold with that
arch of eye
beak
cleaving

to the wind returning
if
deft
you
had the wits to
do what
you wanted I
never understood
why quite said
little then
what could I
say enjoying
company &
shy to
miss
now all
you said Paul this
morning the
fog has
worse
holding the
hillside closer to
swing the
thing will not
open now
another
day another
jams
but
to want it
singing the
no more
possible than
what it sings
to &
to sing too
still

#10

how much live memory drying
washing on the window's
(imitation) double-glazing down

that path
argue with myself ? Healthy–
chrysanthemums

for the dead– I'm dressed (except
for pants) exclusively in others'
clothes, not wealthy not

wise, a minimum
monthly repayment & bedouin
sense navigating

kids' soft toys & floor
space cleared that's twice
today caught breathing

improvisation

“trains I’ll never catch pass beyond the garden”

The world divides

those who drive
& the rest of us who cannot.

Applewood axed

sweet green hissing
in the fire

split
between needs that drive &

me is

another crowd. Roof-humps

veer out of fog
the homes

each smallest

form lurching Springward blind aphid moth
mashed toad a friend talking of his son’s
judo “not to hurt & he got hurt” O

let me go home they

sing they sing I

feel so broke up

that it dawns on

the vivid & the foreign

in that lapse

before the approach
of far traffic can touch the ears

| |

sun again on its haunches behind a muslin
shroud thinning by the minute. Awake
early & the evidence
begins to look like a borrowing from things that can't
be representative & so must be
ushered in , a present tense of forms , moving
in , or something like *the* forms moving
in advance of grammar , a string
vest to be torn away
from the backs of trees towards Trelazé *where many
of France's great*
pigeons don't scare
easy , stare
back , their feet in the roof-
gutters scratchy as dead holly leaves , stone-
eyed topiaries
before flight in
the not-yet-hot light caught
in the act of sizing up .

A Threesome

(i) (*a greeting*)

Liam, your nine
week grin keen
as lavender from

a gypsy girl's
go on mister
for a posy

hello there you

(ii) (*a lullaby*)

Off a whole holm : wych elm
burrowed through by beetle,
felled &

you topple too—
Well, what shall we do, Liam,
who all fall down?

Brave it, my fellow sapling—

Put out in the flow
where the humps of islands
hold the channel

& let our short canoe
go, nodding among the headwaters

#12

(beatwave)

stifled

 ashen effigies
at Pompei

a horror of stasis

 as this is—
Each

 day

blueish

 dustiness combs the

distances to tinder.

 Vox populi “we kept
our tempers

even with god”, wrote

 Apsley
Cherry-G. What

 he wouldn't
have given

 for a beer

Valdeez

the water-bug

hugs

close, the

evening shadows, as

evening shadows approach across the water

*

the water-bug

jigs

his tail-end in the water

up&down

up&down

*

water-bug

standing there

sees the ocean drawing near:

fish in the water

fall&rise

with the tides

*

say, the water-bug's
still jigging
up there on the water-hills he's on top of

gazing out, sniffing
out the breezes off
his western seas

*

water-bug's
in a dream now

by the ocean – he
thinks – perched
atop a fish he
is standing – so
he thinks – foot-
sure on ground

what's up
he looks down

something here must be alive

*

stranded
/
blackened
from standing on that sick fish

the water-bug's engulfed

's gone wandering all the shorelines of his ocean

Valdeez is a doubtful translation of a translation of a Yuman song gathered by Frances Densmore and included in Jerome Rothenberg's anthology *Shaking the Pumpkin*.

at the frontier

the accent tricky
to follow, but neat
with the sticky-
backed plastic on the windscreen, moaning
that his phone/
 beneath the Jura's
masts
& parabolic dishes/
 waving
it towards the car "can
you believe it? This
is Switzerland, &
 every
 single
 system's
 down"

#13

with such easy
negligence (first
strip the leaves &

then / bend
-ing to cut your nails
(wash
carefully
the celery

stalks / white
flesh (saying

nothing

(slowly

sway-
ing

(for an hour or
(Or

till ready / this decent
thing your body knows
to do slowly
humming to yourself as

(saying
nothing (or
(when ready you
(then

you let me waste my breath on it

ABC

[a]

night's messcan's a glass plinth o' starfists
over city-pips' spilt tracks disused
nomad glossaries sold at halftime
in the football to des millions
de foyers when
you think about it kiss
goodbye the Milky Way's
margin spreads the length the sky is
quite something to say to say
it eager
mass gone critical before it
 all starts getting personal after a while

*

[b]

night's messcan's a glass plinth o' starfists
over city-pips' spilt tracks disused
along the airfield's edge wristless
bracelets pinched to braille-point-
lights
of excitable
text multiplied many thousands of times
the energy the people
necessary to boil a kettle

*

[c]

particles of sand .

the particularities of sound .

nothing to understand the

threshold .

human .

Nottingham songs:

on the inside & on the outside

To live with anyone
you see watching

me I think
sometimes a song

in that cell at night
it's difficult

*

that people walk
naked

influenced by the media or what times
you eat 2 sticks, sacks, talking

about the power of animals, death
to teach people afraid

to breathe to let go to get
on with it we cannot

kick the wind
but take movement from it

*

She has wrinkles, she looks young
And they take us to the pub called the Ferryboat

Well it isn't a story

And when he was a little boy
She got something metal and smashed it to pieces
I never got to see him in real life

*

for centuries
you don't feel like a person

the so called
community 400

years visible in
the body bearing

in mind what the body
can express you

feel it the wind pulling
us twisting

*

Where is this place Nowhere ?
Far off between the days

Halfway & light, for a hundred years,
“the big ship sails/ in the larding gale”

Do people ever speak like that
Witha withouta without a hat ?

*

light moves from
the shut world

away &
ridiculous the

room the external you
can say it with your body out

there the street light something
you can say connected

sand (?) thinking
the sound

the body makes startling
the universe alive

*

I jumped up
in the sky
& I sat
on a cloud
& I et
all the cloud up

I hope this is clear
I enclose a very basic sketch

*

I feel just/
just/
switched

off a song difficult
that people walk
influenced
by the music because
of the music starting stopping the voice a
feeling we could never understand but I felt
for the children the people citizens my family
it touches sad & we don't know nothing
about it & talk
every day
locked

river running swift & naked it wouldn't matter
if we were all shut away the
light moves the music

moves so I feel it.

*

air-raid

1.

“It was almost like a circle”

“It was just”

“vapour trails”

“as you looked up in the sky”

“all you could see”

“And it was just like a ring”

“as if”

“they’d round & round & round”

*

“In my mind all the time”

“the smashing of glass and windows”

“and you’d be sweeping up the glass

“it was”

“quietness you”

“in the middle of the night”

“all our windows used to go”

“all you’d see was the nets” “hanging down”

“we”

“listening”

“for that stop they’d be”

“going along & they’d stop in the middle of the night”

“it was”

“we were listening for that stop”.

*

And every shop window in Carrington Street, Wheelergate and everywhere right in town, right up to Parliament Street, every shop window was smashed to pieces. And clothes fell out the window where they had the window dressers, and everything, all fell out, were all on the road. We walked down there because we allays made our way on a Saturday morning when we were on nights, we was going to the Empire Caff. And you could’ve stole anything that night, everything was laid in the gutter.

*

“and I felt this”

“and I felt this terrific thump”

“and this wall vibrate”

“and I thought”

“the Meadow Lane Bakehouse”.

“and this particular bump” “I think”

“I think it was”

NOTE: *Nottingham Songs* are arranged from words voiced by prisoners in Nottingham Prison and children from (for the most part) Netherfield junior school. *Air-raid* is spoken by elderly people from the same district.

...notes toward a PR job...

(i)

Not knowing who Maurice Ravilliac was
or what he did to make Ewan think
I should, & the rendering slack
about the bricked throat's leaning backward

into some single human heart's long hey-
dyed history— There's some consonance here,
mobile as Lala in Tellytubby land
where only the rabbits do not stumble

on the lovely music, yes *what larvely music*
that human from the burrow comes,
to which I'm pitched, an almost daily
composite of children and assassins

who altogether mark the limit of a core
too molten to be either ore or heat
built from the pressures of our binding selves
plus abutments:

you'd think it were enough, surely,
in anyone's money, to recognise
we act alone & learn earth's hammered paths
as footbound, not stone

margins or conclusive forms backtracked to an origin
like flu-bugs, in cosmic dust arrived by storm,
but walkways our speech treads down
through winter sunlights at all costs

*

(ii)

It tried to snow & then turned bright–
frost gone from all but north-
facing slates has left
thawed circles in each one–

Foreigners in a foreign land
of tars that Monsieur Jospin says
will all be cleared by March
not counting the 300 million trees

which in any case it may be argued/
oh but livelihood's an expense that living
fuels into the bargain and, yes, well
then, please, yes, deal me in.

I draw the curtain for a child, poorly
since yesterday he avoids the light
will be alright tomorrow, or Wednesday, soon
at least amongst the lengthening days which

as easily might simply not occur:
a friend's brother killed in the Congo war,
lost in this world's swirling tides
& nothing that with any meaning might be said–

He coughs..
& the geeseskeins rise from where they winter on the coast
& the current joke goes, “put an oyster in your tank”,
& every single finger stings with cold

*

(iii)

The pearl speaks like an asterisk in its shell.
I take the bike & ride round vines
that they've clipped to stumps
knowing full well that by April they'll

be pretty near the last
to put out leaves. I mean the firmament—
that there might be something like a common
element in what on earth I think I'm doing

grinding the gears, the tears between clouds rolled
into unpublicised bundles & fugal
entries onto no man's land—
We stick our necks out like cormorants

along a line of flight
where cameras catch sight of all
that flecked residue the self
amounts to in passing far

too far too fast. Count
the number of plastic bottles in a ditch
& try to imagine what accomplishment it takes
to shape the living daylights into sedimentary rocks

or push up fossil oysters from these hilltop fields
glossed by almost horizontal light
that smacks against the clods
without *marque*, medallion or warranty card

*

(iv)

Given the circumstances
I think you would do well
to find something else you could be doing.
Ken Hom's *Stir-Fry Cookery*—

Infected miasmas coughed from below the lungs—
Was that the Sandman I saw just then
hanging fire & shuffling off into the kitchen
to put feta in the beetroot salad?

You just try to sleep. Snap. Like chickenbone jelly.
The longboats were out there again today,
a patrol criss-crossing with every intention
of laying into this patchwork need of thread-

thongs, siskins, bonded wheezey energies
borne in singlets of down-sized song
that jag back & in & out beyond
the horizons of our sight, yours& mine I mean

which seems quite simply true from this chair.
Given the circumstances I think you should
flee the henchmen, Pingu-tongued
isso mente la solstum bakum

lob the vocables into the European pan
where if you think you are, you are, strung
out between a spectroscopy of stars & the next
door neighbour, gone by the window, baguette in hand

*

(v)

“In this village which we know so well”
occupied by Latin grammars in retreat
M. le maire’s friend has a mantrap at her doorway
whose iron teeth house a lamp, snap, each

next step a test of thresholds.
The German Ocean thrusts its frets
& saline dripping threat fed faster than the sense
can seize, so even cars begin to look

like legend given time on days like this, but
who’s quibbling? light feasts on vine-wires,
sends fine lines up the effortlessly fissured cliff
of a tufa wall, all that’s left

of someone’s home, *des rances, des vignes*
red beads of sunwet frost along the verge
“by Osiris & by Aphis”
we’d better stop then if you need a pee.

Step into the fresh
air from north-east & the skin
seems suddenly an interface, invasive as a sponsor
included round the corporate hearth

in need of shares to float against
the daily counterpoint of death
& hot, dropped flares that keep the planes aloft,
exercising you’d say for somebody-or-other’s public good

*

(vi)

For lack of habitat the numbers fall
attempting to colonise the law
il ne faut pas dire
“weekend” “hamburger” “*le bon timing*”

if you'd like to stay the night of the 24th
you're welcome to the attic space where the light
filters through the canopy since mice
chewed through the insulation rolls.

It's my fortune to be engulfed in love
muddled legs along the night make
the demarcation of our several distinct lives
decidedly confused, says Alice

comme un petit crachin qui descend le bourg
where there are people in the café drinking late
which is nothing that anyone could call a world
disposed according to the mean solar second

which is nothing like accurate enough
at even one part in a million million
this populous oscillating heart you've known
some twenty years & more

lulled occasionally
by conversation ranged across a table, the vestibule
wherein our hands reach out towards a mineral hill & search
its seams, no doubt, laid out about the solid stuff of us

*

(vii)

Windows, doors, forced open by the gale
we shoved them back at 4am.
got rained on sheltered in the bed
& waited for them smashing

wide against the walls again, skin
electric with transmission
& whinings from the chimney.
“The Norsemen came & poured

across the frontiers... seas...”
extending in the darkness sluicing
out across our necks the ridic-
ulous notion that a nation state exists

at such limits of resource, oh
sure, *un mobilité féroce*, dear
Christ, that I were in her arms & she'd
teach words'll fuse this storm to speech.

Look, it's just that I'm trying to think a way
to think there is a tract our feet
wrest contact from some hope
smelling of camomile & cinders, a cost-

effective means to not get strapped for cash & fight
the hostile bids whose fists blow straight
across the weathermap tonight to scrap
whole orchards like rejected tenders

*

(viii)

Chiming in to what occurs to me you
must be joking if you think its range
is ordered thus
a simplifying totem & then some

sensor sends back my words
*Your message contained unsuitable language
has not been delivered*
those holy bullies listening in to keys

from beyond their grave & Noddy
land of beep
Let them try with their harps in seas
of foreignly in lovely sounds of un

told words, tall words, tooled
forms of levelled cadences
like sapling willows that my mouth
is always falling foul of. *Cul.* Cuckoo. Mercy.

Merci beaucoup. & tear our strife
bedded under coastal hulks & bearing up, out
among the *degats* of a beach made black
by warrior-droves among children

building sand-dams to keep the waves
from piling in their failure over
& out among the rushings off of backwashed shells,
amongst the effort to wrench voice-clinker

Note: *Notes toward a PR Job* was accumulated to celebrate Peter Riley's 60th birthday in 2000.

poem without an end

trame de famille a poster
on the wall for a friend who
makes plaster things from
the folds in hankies cast

breath on cold air
a palimpsest fills the grass
our elders walked on
to the last moment

though you would have guessed
it anyhow, the point
being meanings trace
through wherever you put them down

like an empty glass I didn't
ask didn't
need to ask you
were there refilling it & it

grips hard still now April
's warm after arctic days. The dust-
men jump from their cart bang
on schedule, or just about, friday, will

go round the island next
a chaff of voices winnowed
in the afternoon behind
them diesel trailing on

the air a tide of—

Variants before a theme

daylight's slim lightening
minutes after birdsong had & this being April
it's suddenly quite clearly



light paper & stand
well, here – churchsquare – song
from a lark's height in clear air



clef clear open
the door to singsong dog-a-bone
tuffeau worn light as pretzel-dust



wotcher mate cough to clear
songe d'une nuit d'été
with celery. So that about wraps it up for enlightenment.



(slight hiatus here

“...& sons:
everything to clear”)



follow the clear
clue-song where

in the dark the kids' globelight's lighting half of Africa



Burghclere : the war
of crosses at song stations & the whitening
sun's light spirit's level



eidos interactive enlighten Lara's
song across the old Berlin wall's line on
a postcard— One clear idea you : I



light song clear
nicotine stain sounds of the church
clock struck & laid on the air still



“...Once at Mamaroneck, said Aunt Fini, Uncle Adelwarth spent all of one afternoon telling me about his time in Japan. But I no longer remember exactly what he told me. Something about paper walls, I think, about archery, and a good deal about evergreen laurel, myrtle and wild camellia. And I remember something about an old hollow camphor tree which supposedly had room for fifteen people inside it, a story of a decapitation, and the call of the japanese cuckoo, said Aunt Fini, her eyes half closed, hototogisu, which he could imitate so well...”



of a toadnight the clear
perpetual song-chatter
whose *fond* enlightens
Tallis' lines gone out in
an anthem of shade&light
comme un songe long
clear of hearing's harbour

(During his last trip to Japan Ric Caddel explained in an e-mail that he had been presented with an ideogrammatic seal of his name which, on checking, I see came out as 'Clear-singing Light'. My memory has messed with this – what I recalled was 'Ri Ka Deru' or 'clear song enlightenment'. The quotation is from W.G.Seald, The Emigrants, Vintage, 2002, p.81)

#14

gazelle self fodder blink
twice for yes
along the borders of the radio
someone singing Die Erlkönig
living in absentia Mull hinterland
names for islands off the continental shelf

*

#15

(after Pierre Joris)

of a Thursday night
the radio's gift
burdened by too much summer
even for England's Atlantic bluff

(Elgar's first in A flat)
heart & hand & life regardless

Le Soleil Se Lève

(an exercise in translation)

the sun is rising
the sun is rising up
the sun rises up at east
stands up at east, is standing up
is getting up, is lifting, is lifting east,
rise at the east the sun
is going up
at east
is raising, rises east
is up to raise on East the sun
is being raising
is being going up
wake up being
is waking up awake wakes up at east is raising rising
standing up from east the sun is going to get up & lift
on the east side, arise
go up
up
at east on east from east rise up at east the sun
awakeing
is going to wake up & get up from the east, up
down east
is raising,
rising
rise eastern
at the east
the sun
levers itself
up

A Personal Message For You Mr Baker From The
Inland Revenue At Bootle

**WELCOME TO THE
CENTRE
FOR
NON RESIDENTS**

MANIFEST

for the day after valentine's day, 2003.

The fact is high density
liquid forms of settlement ,
guacamole sauce . Pity

exact scrambled argument .
The city's
strategies are protective & meant

to nurse Borringer through polity
issues with supplies of kitchen equipment ,
slap-on masculinity .

*

Hello , I'm Louise Brogan. And you're..?
Gobbets pre-empty talk .
These people are collecting tar

from a beach in Spain – they stalk
like durables in a country far
beyond current staffing-levels . A bulwark

built from plastic teaspoons , aphasia
on a stricken sidewalk ,
overdubbed stickmen , package-food , war .

*

If you never intend to vote Labour again
we'll give same day attention whenever possible .
Lions chewed a path through the plain

red ones , green ones , anything edible
went into the blender . Owning another's pain
at the outsource is available

in braille , like a ketchup stain ,
& as easy to use , with handy labels
to keep you informed of what Berringer's saying .

*

One gene for fishfins , the same for the fresh
versions fossils finish up with . Sushi
drive-in coin-wash

mixed salad bag begs belief as whoever she
gets a purchase on – oh Susie someone – a sack of ash ,
boil-in-the-bag Eros from Fray Bentos with mushy

peas ta . Hello nose-cone . Whatever'll wash
'll do for Berrigo . Shove it full of cushy
numbers and analyse on the nearest woman-mesh.

*

They slung the guts into the pit –
Jean-Paul reckoned it was excellent *engrais* .
I watched it

slop out , a dustbin full of blood & blue-grey
liver-globs . Polite about it
they were , the *abbats* – the weather – the prey ,

this multilateral flesh is air to . Better than cowshit
as Bergan'd say . Buried in Milk Tray–
Oh stuff your prick wherever it'll fit.

*

For flexible response see date on base . Bend
the lie of the land to a government line,
hit *send*–

the message'll be with before you get sign
of it's having arrived . Noises in the air suspend
disbelief like Bergen'd turned into a design

for stripped pine furniture this very weekend–
Noises on the air fall like gaderine swine
inhabited by the clifftops of old Engelende .

*

“It all depends on what’s in the account”
as Berrigan didn’t say . Intravenous bestiary ,
meat-flop . Eat . Mount

the concept with military
precision , guided to the amount
exactly due . The bill went to an address in Coventry—

blank screen—thrust north—a silicon implant
to download exchange-rates , mind-carpentry
bent on a mouthful of nails . Eat that . Don’t ask . Discount .

*

Let me say I respect your right to test
chthonic marshgas smear
lungblood of Brannigan’s punctured chest

upon the hair-ends of a sample ear .
Meringue clouds make a picture of the farthest
lionparks sporting Calvin Klein’s 2003 gear .

Work makes free as you go further west –
an 0800 number’ll tell you what to wear,
service conviction on request

*

Me speak you speck take stock barely
a language to do it in . The lions
tore up O'Borrigan airily

between them , red and green ions
streaming along the sky's rim where the
Nimjams flit . Meat-floops , trafficked prions ,

retaliate early .

The history of speech considered as a series of try-ons
tested in a factory on the outskirts of Orly .

*

(Coda)

*She told me he'd died in a car, her husband
or her son, in '63.
We counted forty years since it'd happened.*

*When the gendarmes came & knocked on the
door the day stopped burning and
she was still returning to it though we were forty*

*years on & singing & she was singing too like a one woman-band
loud enough for fifty.*

And not once did it occur to her that I might not understand.

Note: *Manifest* is called as a witness for the mobilisation of the public that occurred on 15.02.03 in various cities across the world.

Vingt-six mots ressortissants de leur propre langue & parfaitement intégrés dans la vie française

ALCOOL	BASKET	CALEBASSE	DIABOLO
EDELWEISS	FJORD	GLASNOST	HANDICAP
IGLOO	JACINTHE	KETCHUP	LOFT
MARIHUANA	NIRVANA	OGIVE	PANDA
QUARTZ	ROBOT	STOP	TAMBOURIN
UTOPIE	VAGUE	WEEKEND	XENOPHOBIE
	YAOURT	ZIDANE	

Carte postale, fait à Marseille, 12.05.02
à Musicatreize, 53 Rue Grignan, 6°
for the second round of the presidentials

MUTUAL CREDIT

An elegy of sorts for Bob Cobbing

1.

Tok in unison
of a technical hitch-hunt
by popular request
is one song & done
(but needing something mysterious to go with it)

Great aplomb
in the hope of little errors
stitched / complex
for the great day has gone & come
(& with no wrong notes!)

Wild hideous gales
in respect of
the Rabbit of Uncertainty attempting
one short tok for yes it must surely fail
(ask the piano tuner!)

Well, you will get the idea.

2.

Yes, I remember Slough. Playing Puccini at sight
under the flightpath to Heathrow
to an assembly of pub-
glasses & a probable November, dark anyhow

& the pages were missing, turned
the page
 & the pages were missing, one

by one, were completely gone.
I settled on /

between a train going Elsewhere &
a carrot-stub for nose,

making it sense it
as you go along

3.

a short Romanian dance
 (please help yourself)

Ligeti-dense as
festival
this light is
unstable to eyes at first

glance, then grab it, a partner
to go with in unison
along the thought of all that wine
 (please help yourself)

& everybody doxy-dos.
Like so. Question:
who is responsible ? & does it matter ?
& when crossing the road

REMEMBER TO LOOK BOTH WAYS

4.

eat / one / tok
total panic
hard place & a rock

barb / moot / daylights
but chose Bartok
in front of all those people

(who, at two legs each, measured
nearly four thousand ankles to the hall)
knock

twice / yes / man
can talk, is the difference, between
mouthfuls, oh yes let's talk

5.

Shortly before entering hospital for a triple by-pass operation and already subdued by the preliminary drugs, Gérard described how the area around the church, especially to the east across what is now a road, used to be the commune's graveyard before they moved it up the hill to the modern cemetery. In fact, a little further up the hill incorporated now into a private dwelling, you can find the consecrated ground where the deceased were ferried for burial from the parish across the river because on the flood-plain, which is regularly inundated in winter, no ground was suitable. When a house was built last year to the east of the church all the soil and rubble that was excavated had to be put somewhere and the nearest convenient site seemed to be the sandpits below the village, on ground demarcated by signs warning that extraction is forbidden. Gérard thought somebody should say something about this to the *Conseil General* for in amongst the dumped waste are dozens of

exhumed human remains from the former graveyard. You can pick through the bits of bones if you want, most recognisably femurs and broken hip-sockets. Gérard reflected a moment and then said, well, there's a *gai* subject when you're about to have your heart operated on.

6.

the glory has passed
I suspect for ever Thanks

for your suggestions
& encouragement

I wish I'd
had the courage

to do something
more but the limits

(10 minutes)
were a bit strict

7.

mikroc cosmic panjandrum
Bobcob-tok come&gone
rhythms of light & startled

rabbit's feet across the field-acres.
Knock twice for yes
(there are laws to all this) &

be done.

A short Romanian dance
coming from the dressing room,

then the lunch room,
with great aplomb. Luckily-tok
this was decided

between ferocious showers
& great sunlight-
clickings-over that

shafted the churchtower.
Knit one, stitch, it really isn't
as complex as it looks

(though the OED says:
“occurring in the farrago of nonsense
composed by S.Foote to test the memory
of Old Macklin, who had asserted that
he could repeat anything after once hearing it”–

Humming the murmurings of
uncheckable bee-numbers assembled
into companies, neighbours & nomad

meanings, well
the great day has come & gone
& we shall & we shall

oh we shall have snow all the live-long year.

(You'll get the idea.)

8.

the roof flying off
in a warm interlude
sitting disconsolate
the Sad Rabbit of Truth

(luckily my neighbour has responsibility)

due to strong lights
and having only one instrument
– the text-arm –
like ships in the night

(since you brought the subject up)

encroaching
on the coast here
cousin Adolf from the 1880s
& unlikely to be doing anything

(I think my guest is waking up)

Insects: think of them as the little bits that come down with the rain.

9.

or are you
 dare
you / idea

‘in unison’

Runner bean stems’
chicanery on the one stick
make a curl-form

But hang on a mo, didn’t
you say: *in unison* ?

‘public’, but at the very least has to be somewhere other than right here). And this *is* a concern, for the transfer often seems to be abandoned, as if a notion like ‘communication’ resembled too closely a capitalist transaction perhaps and that somehow it must therefore be contaminated by implicitly corrupt relations, so that all the possible relations with another are reduced down to a narcissistic address shared by those in the know and which has no real need to go beyond itself, however energetic the transformations it incorporates into its visible surfaces. Well I can’t deal with that. Let’s negotiate on grounds of, yes, mutual credit, and leave the differences to speak for themselves from within a real change in form. As happens in the best conversations. Which all seems a bizarre way of putting it. But for heaven’s sake, if not, we’ll end up with the sort of mouthing that seems to colour so much public speech and which might as well be described by the programmes on a washing-machine: “normal”, “intensive”, “rapid/cold” or – as an obvious prior necessity – “intensive pre-wash”.

12.

Inhabitants of night-ships passage
migrants in the radars & light-cups
along the coast here
waiting their turn
plough channels through irregular seas .

The spider in the kitchen has moved
three feet or so
across the ceiling today
is waiting its turn in
a direct line above Ewan’s

freshly baked banana cake. If this
concerns loss it is hard
to name how
it came darkly to occupy
so clear a space so dense

a horizon events
lace themselves into
& love occurs & has its place
which is probably as nearly political as
deregulation gets while the wind-gusts

rip at the rooftiles,
tailflukes,
the piled parsnips in the porchway

(The rabbit went that-a-way— !

“darkness, silence, water, stone”

13.

The clobber that's in a name
& gathers dust—

Astern,
port-lights of a channel-ferry
moving northward to another coast

14.

I am completing a small series on INSECTS, lovable as they are ... This was sparked by a story from an old (i.e. aged) friend of mine up here, when a Yorkshire relative of his died many years ago, and the widow had the coffin set down outside the orchard (on its progress to the kirkyard) in order to walk over and tell the bees. A common enough image, but one that reminded me how close we are to insect-kind.

Well, I think my guest for the moment is about to wake up

so I will end now

The dance, the dancer

(for Eric Mottram at 70)

long wondered why
so much is
unquotable twentieth
century poetry beautiful
to be in the action
Williams
hearing the crack of
Christmas
greens a brilliant
destruction
off the North
Sea thin April wind
the children
in the kitchen shouting
for more pasta
Eric
cuttlefish
we found like plaice-flesh
on shore-rocks
addressed
by an evidence if
the door's open
it's natural
to go through it (remember
the train &
you were talking
right up to
the tunnel stopped
with the dark &
like nothing'd happened
resumed
as
daylight struck back—

One half of
the speed
 of reaction at seventy's
another coming at you
 the other way an
 apple core
pitching
 down the road
in our hands
 centrifugal
energies blood
 and belonging
in the pattern
 the line
 of the Barrage
de la Rance holding
up the traffic while
the tide
 beneath our feet turns
the turbines in
the ocean in
the head the flesh in
the line
 emblazoned on the surge

#16

(for Jonathan Williams 60th)

give me a spark
plug the gap
a set o' feely

gauge AND
HOW we'll
get it move some

#18

A plan to light the city's streets with fish
clogs up the works back there where it came from
a wedding with, far off, Edith Piaf's tones, she'd know
how to give a textured finish to the voice.

They wandered lonely then as if by choice
& only later did someone who I didn't know
explain that 4 days after death a herring forms
slow phosphorescences in its silenced flesh.

*

#19

“...but
it wouldn't take you long
to learn all those old songs” she
sd in her wheelchair oh you
must know *Le Petit*
Vin Blanc tapping
her ear to
show where the sounds were
held still
–whirled
leaf-scrap took to the streets a fake
autumn burning beneath the skin of august
worn thin old
world three
months on from a war...

*

#20

gracious as the vines have these last
few days turned brick & cream

cracker brown , what's fixed
upon the screen's the spit of Stan

Laurel in an early talking film
banging his head against the autumn's

ceiling , & failing , hymn to what's human
being as much as its apostrophe

*

#21

empty document nothing to file even
midge's trip the light a white
butterfly whatever
happened to summer happened
these last few months people
walk out in fear , cars ,
crash the gears trying to sleep
last night through the small hours
in a city no
it wasn't fear but fear
was a part of it unable
to exit the evidence
gone before you know it
though you do
know it and are moved
to act like you didn't
singing

#22

(slightly asthmatic)

a nose for strewn airs:
thistly, breathing
 in the nat-
ure of things breathing the unaccomplished
sounds hold us plumed achene Tommy's

car-radio droning on
all Wimbledon
fortnight Sandtex stabbed
in the neighbour's wall the
smallest corners:

“anything that grows where it isn't wanted”–

How the tablature changes with each
note struck wings
a colonist of the ground of the repeated
disturbance our *weed*
filled hearts do still root out in

*

#23

(calypsos)

my father is
over foreign
island/

there are ships that
bring corn from
foreign/

some of the corn
overflow the truckies
so we could
take it &

bag
up/

we can
use it to

maintain
some
sense/

i like what my mother
treat me.
she make feel
happy/

my mother
love me
& I love
my mother/

to make people
see
me
out
clean.

—vinton faulkner: jamaica

*

#24

a difference of world
is another day
turning

saxophone & bracken—
Taste

mists in the mouth the mush
of rotting fruit & cheapish
celery at the Co-op.

Dense fogs come
a prelude
to November nights to come

The fig tree is overripe .

*

Back then it always seemed to rain like heck .

*

Sodden and most chambered fruit, like so .
Well you tell me then .

*

.....
.....wrecked harmonics come soliciting
10 francs for this or that good cause & still
these callisthenics won't be talked
into a half-apt shape , or made to slip
out forwards
like Salome short of a decent platter.

My daughter starts to pick out colours. My eldest son
for ages now has known
how to recognise the makes of cars
at fifty yards through a rear view mirror.
Kurt Vonnegut, who regrets
he never invented rollerblades, can talk
of Hiroshima
so that it seems to mean exactly what it means to him.
My other son sings *West
Side Story* while carrying dishes
& has to ask
what s.o.b. stands for.

Spassky-Fischer in Reykjavik.
Jets and Sharks.

“As dew on the path this day lay mild.”

You get a bum note not when the thing's
pitched all wrong, but when
what's instrumental misconceives the in
clines of a song

That would have been in about '63 I guess .
In parallel with weeds & sand & grass .

...alle fleisch...

...a river frozen over...

And then there was the ice we'd smoothed to glass—
a mini-Cresta Run right by the doorway to the class .

You know Brahms and builders have at least this much in common:
they're always leaving loads of unused stuff behind them .

phylums of extinct forms
in slates pixels
resolve
an image of cupped hands

hold a small boat infirm
upon the carboniferous waters
shelved rock told what you think
it means to hand back

the shrinkage of our very selves
to an aerial in time that picks
clinker out of ash,
cold coals from a supermarket

trip for wine.
The reception area's full of folks
of sound mind getting
their hands on goods as mine

do, yours
ditto, the skeletal
miracle that comes
by whatever means we have to hand

lavender
& bamboo—

A ring
about the moon in cloud.

Time and again this month
the rain has filled those oildrum lids

with puddles.
“I’d like a *chausson pomme*”.

“...funny how
that kid, he’s always talking to himself aloud”.

mark our kindness in each other.

Scan. Scar. This felted sphere,

the whole sweet sheebang.

Her little finger wound round mine

infern the rest of all

those inverse regions I imagine are

*

NOTE: At one time near the end of the sixteenth century it was the custom I think to print songbooks with each harmony line laid separately on the page as if following the four points of a compass; the idea being that four people sitting round a table should each be able to read a part comfortably without either having to stare over another's shoulder or, presumably, having to purchase multiple copies. These short pieces are intended as leaves from a similar kind of book, each carrying one part in a music that's necessarily incomplete as the lines stand.

They were written while listening to the music of Arvo Pärt, specifically *Fratres*, a work that the composer has arranged at least six times for different combinations of instruments. The pieces aren't of course in any sense an attempt to reflect the music. I listened to it to keep out other sounds. It has its place on the other side of the table.

...yellow blue tibia...

in the semblance of a music of
our making flecked surf off the prow-wake
who speaks furious in these currents
there is nothing to resemble us, no

do not stop
these words if they are open
it is you
 make them, begin

tell me we can approach each other the
open sea shameless
images pounding at the ferryside the long
view darkness falling back from France
a lone guillemot batting at the water, startled
 in mid-channel we

have no lives but others
make them a sea
sick with tides jetsam the restless
knowledge we never hold of what
this singing is o tell me
what this singing is we stare
out & from the midst of

the roots

that each detail
eats the heart:
fastidiously peeling back leek
leaves sheath the dirt
won't wash

roots

speak loudest, good
morning mrs spencer warm it's
a cold wind we shelter unintentional
true words wrested from often
it is only a sound from the pipes at night
it is only somewhere a sound

better speak for none
than fall
in the hands of some greedy bastard you can see it
in the eyes a land
staked out

I

look you
the manifest we walk amongst

trees
ripped down no they do not
need us their ruin stands
in the storm's eye
& in the storm this

eldritch dust

#25

skull ringing the
neighbour's plumbing *casquette*
on first name terms

with a jar of mint (needs
water) kitchen
basilica— Pilgrim,

take up thy staff along
the borders *la fenêtre*
is not

the window a fly is
crawling up, slipjigs
on *deux pattes* in

con-
densation beads running
liquide et mosaïque

*

a neckeverse

(for Guy Birchard)

grit your teeth pal the
scurf-crusted coprini

spawned in the compost
bag, beg, O

God rot this blistered
epoch's raw dawn blights

eating weed leaves
made bloom like wax

*

#26

.....a casserole on wheels
downloading the syllables like Scott
la Faro on an off-day, item. one
small pink flamingo item.
one pair of Princess shoes item. one
soup ladle "for
looking at the moon" (N
B.: would parents
please
include a spare
set in case of emergencies.....

*

Wearing Number 6 & in New Boots

amongst a round
of yellow shirts
chasing the ball
and not
seeking space we
agreed I
think it was
understood, quick-footed
like a shower
of small birds in their shaking out from a hedgerow,
that it would come
un sens d'espace
where we stood
leaning
on the rail between the pitch & changing rooms .

And I thought
of the host of oyster-stakes
in the littoral off the Pointe du Bile .

That forest and summons into kind .

*

A Pavane on Mr Wray's Locations

Audrey Causey
betwixt Titchworth
and Chidley

possibly

as you go
to the nearest windmill
on the northside of town

(among stones)

we could not find it

*

above the Paper mills
among stones
in the stone walk

as by a great ditch-side
near Stretham ferry
Abundantly

about the Fens
Marsh and Chattersee
In the Isle of Ely

*

Three Part Invention

I

Into the folder marked “thrashings” I twig
rarely if at all how future settings will flag
my messages’ priorities, jag back to foreground
the inevitable hungers that rig their little tents
against a niggard rain so these men
can get on with their work
digging up the threshold to this place – *La Place*
indeed: church, baker, *coiffeur & mairie* –
prefiguring the common market stall
we might exchange our mutual, eventual
nagging doubts upon. The tongue’s
a rag shredded by the democratic jets
that split sky-slabs above, a rag-
bag I suppose I mean the breath
of children, friends, dead-ringers for the only
snag of being
is in fact just that
abrupt
shudder of wrecked sense that drags itself
against the tide of constant racket bedding in-
to corporate speech-forms looking for a sponsor.
They light their fags,
share coffee, bulldoze a wall, cough
frostily over trenches already dug and string
alignments from someone else’s plans, don’t ask me, I just hug
promotions offered in the loop where ‘public’ lapses on
a luminary hope your word against mine
will fit snugly, nothing more. Like so. To get laid
beneath their trowels & be cemented there, counter-
subject to a fugue of yelps & clicks, sea-whistles, huge
dugouts paddled out of history bearing grave goods to a car
boot sale of desire that lugs nicked stuff to your door for free
if you invest entire resource, let’s say, in dried figs.

It matters not a scrap to anyone to know the sack
of clag and drizzle emptied chilly on this European single
winter weekday when the dustmen come,

who missed the bus or what

the 36

male names of sons of sons of men
whose names are on the sides of vans, the names
of artisans dying at Sedan Sarajevo
in the marshes south of Tehran,

whose names are cut in stone

by the *point de recyclage* where someone's
dumped the innards of a vacuum cleaner. I tap
upon the pipes of virtual tones & think
message-systems into being binary
constructs that really lag behind the flow
of conversation, but
pax, "let's communicate" as Maurice says, log on
to the noise of motors and hydraulic scooper-things
that jog the *carrelage* on this kitchen floor, the *bordel*
of shoutings come in from the cold, the whole

complex low of it

blowing in from the west
& 'losing its identity
in Biscay',

Gucci

& Armani Easy

Jet, Corus,

Nike

"look

it's like in

Jurassic Park, it's

got its teeth

right in the window". Listen

to the karaoke ring of hammers tugging
at the heart-fog round the vinestakes of these solid
commune slopes, and try to tell me then it isn't this
their voices vainly scramble up to tag .

II

Red corrugated tubes project
from roadstone rubbles the way
they've left it overnight, hanging

in the cleft between a finished
business and the cliff that
roughly speaking any self's

small loan's
propped up against, as if
this fallen wall of silence

were sufficient
to engulf the night. Forget it.
Rework. Invent

a fox to scent the decent
uncertainties extending out
across a partial

remission from these starless flanks
that pose slight drizzles on a car roof top
in the form of personally

restructured debt.

*Little piggy, let me come in—
I'm out of breath*

*☞ never did I have
an even half-
way useful city-map.*

*

“Among other sights are immense droves of cattle
passing through the city

peculiar,
wild,

between the cooing of a pigeon and the hoot of an owl...”

oooo

*“Many in that crowd tore up the curtains, cut designs out of the wall paper,
and made off with nearly everything readily portable. It was probably the
crudest and most disorderly throng that had visited the White House since the
inaugural reception for Andrew Jackson.”*

oooo

“Men on horseback
cracking ox or steer

everybody covered with dust—

oooo

*“I shall say that ... the Sun ... carries them along, perhaps bringing back
some of those that are of longer duration than a month, but so changed in shape
and pattern it is not easy for us to recognise them”*

*

Red corrugated tubes project
from roadstone rubbles the way
they've left it overnight, hanging

roughly speaking in the cleft
between a finished business and the cliff
this fallen wall of silence makes

audible

as slight rains

do , as breath.

III

Hold my false teeth & I'll
show you how to dance, one
at a time now, orderly
in the manner of
feelings feeling
their way the way Bayou
taps, no, Bayeux
tapestries, ah, no, don't
tell me I know
this one it's
oh, so nearly the tip
of the tongue
of it, snappy
allegro participles
that foot it
o'er the threshold –
pyxels

& pions – see, they
do exist, hold
my false

breath fast on
your breath on
my neck at
night, quick as/&
festive, say
who could
 fake that?

bar-
coded, ad-hoc
Hox
genes clustered an-
echoic symmetries
round the north
of you, south
axes
that make a figure
resolves as us
 for the nonce (best
 not ask) once
 & for all I
 know for
 once it really is
 all of us

 “... outside a café in northern France
& this one is looking through a bunker to the sea,
 this – I’m not sure – it looks like ”
someone we found walking his dogs among the vines,
someone yesterday who was blowing a brass horn in the vines,
 for he had lost his dogs
 & didn’t know where to find them,
“& this: ‘Carline thistle – lime fields – N. Yorkshire’...”

*Dear Mike, could you tell me
how many chromosomes I might reasonably
expect to share with, say, a cactus?*

These
persistent insignia—

Breughel's
clog-women and those long-
nosed Normans under their clumpy
stitched helmets, who got
descendants to the Mississippi
to stomp out a Cajun
fiddle tune that Philippe
was playing only
last saturday
here in the salon on
his bass clarinet. Set

*a bird
on a branch
it's like as not
a finch
in the mid-
distance where the dance
of its flight is light
as a windbell not*

remotely for one instant hit by chance.

: in the heave
of a script
of the sky
crossed by trails
launched
neck 'n crop in

the gullet a
great 'X'
of potential
two
planes criss-
crossing their
migrant
trajectories that

pilot the—
peoples that—
 & the paths

criss-crossing — “Oh
come to bed now,
it’s late &”—

...a moth’s
soft buzz of wings
 as it arcs through
this light’s compass .

NOTE. Quotations in part II are from Whitman’s *Specimen Days*, Gay Wilson Allen’s biography of Whitman and Galileo giving his view of sunspots. ‘Hold my false teeth & I’ll show you how to dance’ is the title of a Cajun dane tune. My knowledge of Hox genes is entirely due to one sentence in the notes to Allen Fisher’s *Ring Shout* where the author quotes Rudolf A. Raff: ‘Animals as diverse as worms, the insects, and mammals, and representing half a billion years of evolution all share a small number of highly conserved genes – the Hox gene cluster – that determine basic body plans and “north-south” axes of the body’.

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