

**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 Clemenceau 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



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 tumblings 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

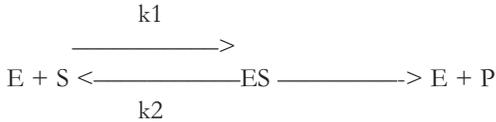
to reckon  
with it common

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

#11

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*.



# #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  
midges 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.

## Efta Botoca's violon

arriving at the services a squall slaps the car  
park & it's a fact suddenly we're all skin & bones,  
39 minutes to the next inspection, an open wound, James  
Reeves greatest singing to the Pringle stacks like nobody's  
business could be right here inside a self  
regulating system of pink fluff & stuff temp-  
orarily out of order, screened in-  
formation about conditions on a remote

motorway wind  
scrapes

at the automatic doors wanting my custom-  
ary uncertainty, which entry's out  
of this market heist and caution because the floor  
is slippery & folks walk right into it  
where he's mopped, drop a polysterene cup,  
imagining nothing has the slightest ghost  
of a chance &

Efta

Botoca's  
violin's lodged unheard  
of at the back of the mind, what

loan

an instrument could offer to a stranger local  
Chinon or home grown hooch talked  
up your mothers & your daughters well  
fed or weary  
limbs no matter could flag  
up, or down, & belly-  
go, a wel-  
come break (?)

...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

speaking 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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