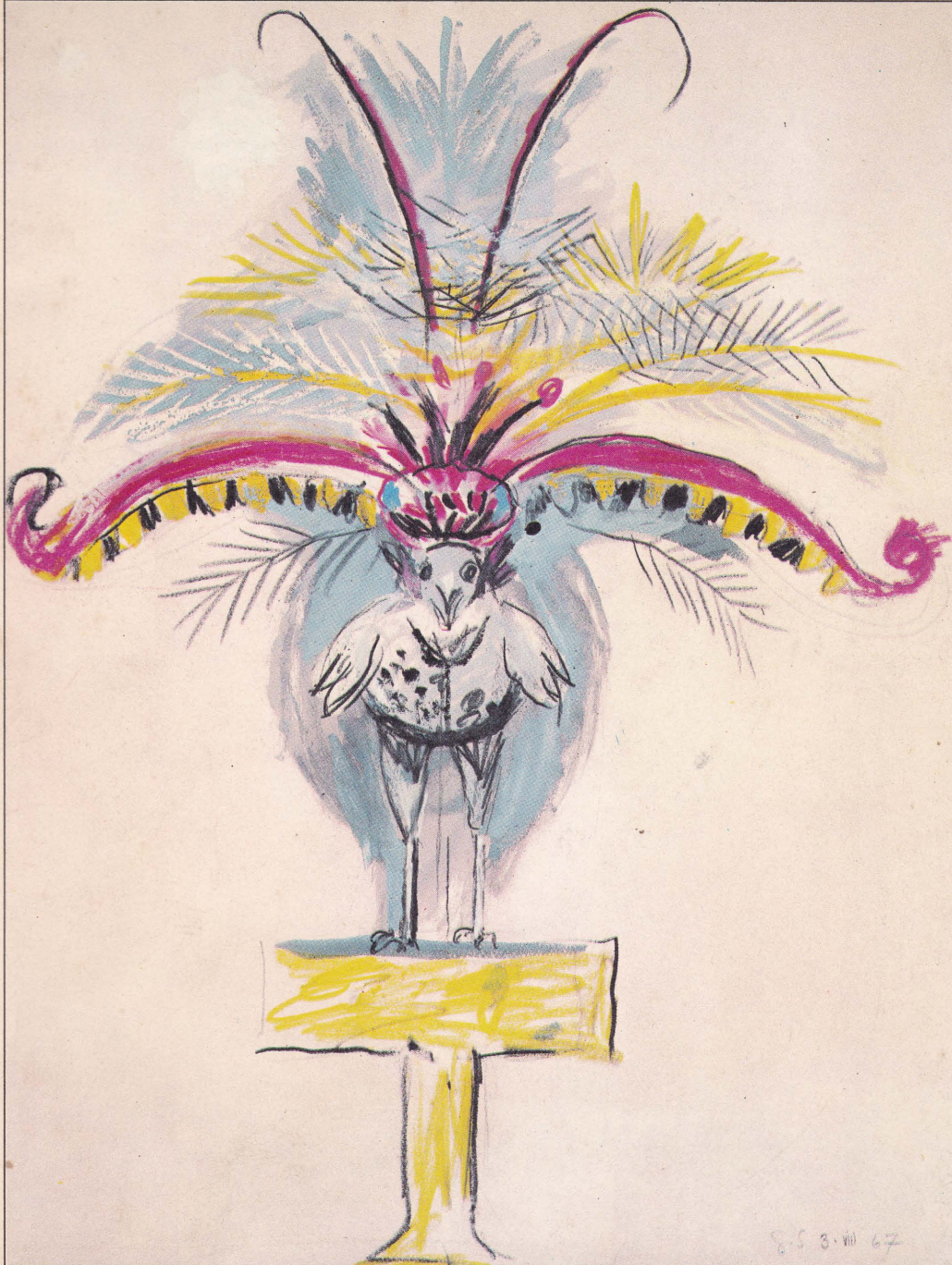


POETRY LONDON/APPLE MAGAZINE



Vol. 1 No. 1

Edited by Tambimuttu

Autumn 1979

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POETRY

(London)

An Enquiry into Modern Verse

- New, entertaining, *alive*, this is the poetry periodical that youth has been waiting for.
- Our intention in this non-party paper is to print work that poets feel they *want* to write rather than what they *ought* to, in order to conform to the shibboleths of certain political and literary cliques.
- Mr Eliot has already observed that "In the present chaos of opinion and belief we may expect to find quite different literatures existing in the same language and the same country." We will make it possible for these different literatures to appear together, so that the public may have a clear and comprehensive idea of what is happening to poetry today.
- We are interested only in *achievement* in the mode of expression called poetry; we print all who merit attention, regardless of their opinions, especially young and unknown writers.
- Every form of *honest* thought will be given a clear voice on this poets' platform. With the results, we hope to be able to resolve the present-day muddle in poetry and criticism.
- A representative selection of modern poets has been invited to appear in the first few numbers:

GEORGE BARKER	H. B. MALLALIEU
ROY CAMPBELL	NIALL MONTGOMERY
*LAURENCE CLARK	NICHOLAS MOORE
DORIAN COOKE	*PHILIP O'CONNOR
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* Appearing in the first number.

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POETRY LONDON/APPLE MAGAZINE

Editor: Tambimuttu

'All things come back to their roots' —Lao Tzu

Associate Editors:

Jane Williams, Robin Waterfield, Ian Smith, Myfanwy Piper, Sebastian Barker,
Dhiren Bhagat

FIRST LETTER

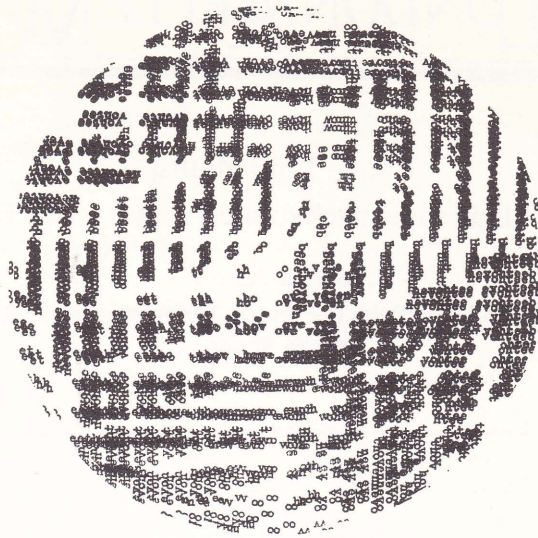
Many of those who have written about *Poetry London*, or the forties in general, were too young to have followed its actual appearances, and the collections of poetry, poetic prose, art, criticism, and Jazzbooks, associated with it. For this reason, and because our policy hasn't changed, I reproduce the first brochure we issued in 1938 on the facing page.

Later developments in *Poetry London*, and what is actually happening around us in the atomic fission and electronic world, have added to its function. It should now also represent and include painters, song-writers, novelists, rock-poets, and concrete poets.

The concrete poet analyses language experimentally, almost to vanishing point. In Indian philosophy such a point is known as the *bindu*, a limit which is actually the full-stop from which a new beginning starts. The concrete poet takes the letters of a word apart in order to get at the meaning of language, and in particular at the meaning of poetic perception. Decio Pignatari did this with effect by spelling out LIFE on six pages with one intervening ideogram. (*Concrete Poetry*, ed. Stephen Bann, London Magazine Editions, 1967.) Jochen Gerz achieved something similar by spelling WHITE on a pull-out. (*Experiments in Prose*, ed. Eugene Wildman, Swallow Press, 1969.) Such experiments remind me of investigations of the metaphor, from Aristotle to Empson, though I should like to point out that to investigate is to move in the opposite direction. There is nothing in principle which says that the investigation of the single word is insignificant by comparison. It is illuminating in this respect to remember Middleton Murry in *Countries of the Mind*:

The investigation of metaphor is curiously like the investigation of any other primary data of consciousness . . . Metaphor is as ultimate as speech itself, and speech as ultimate as thought. If we try to penetrate them beyond a certain point, we find ourselves questioning the very faculty and instrument with which we are trying to penetrate them.

The concrete poet makes statements, or expresses ideas, by the way he writes down a single word. For example, *Beethoven Today*, published overleaf, is an experiment by Bob Cobbing which illustrates this point. Such poetic manipulation of the word and metaphor, and extent of holophrasis (defined overleaf), provide us with a yardstick with which to measure the difference between a line of prose and a line of poetry, or the poetic quality of one poet compared to another, or the poetry of one period compared with that of another (much of today's poetry is unmoving and academic).



I quote briefly from *Poetry London-New York* No. 4:

It is the extent of holophrasis (synthesis) of sense, rhythm, sound and form elements which determines the varying degrees of difference between a line of poetry and a line of prose. The process itself is explained by Dylan Thomas in *I, In My Intricate Image*:

Beginning with doom in the bulb,
the spring unravels,
Bright as her spinning-wheels,
her colic season
Worked on a world of petals;

She threads off the sap and needles,
blood and bubble
Casts to the pine roots, raising man
like a mountain
Out of the naked entrail.

Beginning with doom in the ghost,
and the springing marvels,
Images of images, my metal phantom
Forcing through the harebell,
My man of leaves and the bronze root,
mortal, immortal,
I, in my fusion of rose and male
motion,
Create this twin miracle.

These things which are opposite to each other, and those things which have a perfect identity in themselves, are joined together, or related to each other, in the movement of what I might call one holophrastic thrust. It is the perception of the poet which unites the things. In so perceiving he is himself united to the unity he perceives. It is no longer possible to distinguish the poet from the poem. To put this in more general terms, such as might be found in an Indian philosophy textbook, he has achieved the unitive knowledge of superrational intuition, direct and timeless. It is my contention that such unitive knowledge is the most likely type of knowledge to result in 'pure' poetry. (I am, of course, using the word in a sense different from that of A. E. Housman, or Robert Penn Warren.) Furthermore, I contend that all other types of poetry are contingent on this basic apprehension process. I may summarize my argument by stating that it is the extent of wholephrasing, or unitive knowledge, that decides to what extent it is poetry or prose under consideration. The degree of holophrasis reveals the degree of sensory equivalence to experience, and in so doing helps us to categorize a particular work.

I would say, therefore, that poetic clarity does not depend on the language of common speech, but on the vividness of the thing said. The most highly charged line is the most poetic and natural in the sense that it most closely approximates our actual, or natural, experience. In this sense, the most highly charged line is not an interpretation, but a sensory equivalent.

(Abstract, and non-objective, painting might be said to do the same thing.) As much compression, or wholephrasing, as goes on, the more poetic the line will be. To stretch my point to its logical conclusion, the more compression, or wholephrasing, that takes place, the more the line will approach the ideal poem, the ideal word, the single syllable OM, which, in Indian philosophy, is said to contain all meanings in itself. The experiences of the five senses are found there. Here is an example of the use of colours and shapes in wholephrasing contributing to the making of a poem in Kathleen Raine's *Angelus*:

I see the blue, the green, the golden, and the red,
I have forgotten all the angel said.

The flower, the leaf, the meadow, and the tree,
but of the words I have no memory.

I hear the swift, the martin, and the wren,
but what was told me, past all thought is gone.

The doves, the rainbow, echo, and the wind,
but of the meaning, all is out of mind.

Only I know he spoke the word that sings its way
through my blood streaming over rocks to sea,

a word engraved engraved in the bone, that burns within
to apotheosis the substance of a dream,

that living I shall never hear again,
because I pass, I pass, while dreams remain.

Similarly, the intricate articulation of ideas, images, rhythms, and sound elements contributes to the construction of poetic language as opposed to the journalistic or scientific.

I am only repeating all these obvious facts at the present moment since critics do not seem to have a yardstick to measure degree of difference between a line of poetry and a line of prose—to differentiate between a line of Dylan Thomas, for example, or a line of a newspaper editorial. Once grasped, this idea helps us to notice and define more clearly how, within a particular poem, a word of Pound may differ from a word of Richard Eberhart, or Kathleen Raine, since I have already quoted from Dylan Thomas, it might be instructive to see how he looked at himself when putting together the individual words of a poem. He writes:

A poem by me needs a host of images. I make one image—though make is not the word; I let, perhaps, an image be 'made' emotionally in me and then apply to it what intellectual and critical forces I possess; let it breed another, let that image contradict the first; make the third image, bred out of the other two together, a fourth contradictory image, and let them all, within my imposed formal limits, conflict. Each image holds in it the seed of its own destruction, and my dialectical method, as I understand it, is a constant building up and breaking down of the images which come out of the central seed, which is itself destructive and constructive at the same time . . . The life in any poem of mine cannot move concentrically round a central image, the life must come out of the centre; an image must be born and die in another; and any sequence of my images must be a sequence of creations, recreations, destructions, contradictions . . .

Leaving aside the slight suggestion of tongue-in-cheek which this quotation might arouse in some, it is nevertheless fairly obvious, to me at least, that the holophrastic concentration in a poem which is constructed by this method is going to differ markedly from the poems of other writers I have mentioned. Even the following version of a simple American haiku (by Elizabeth Gilbert) has the tension and movement of the 'pure' poetic process I am attempting to get at:

Cool and moist as ice,
The summer's wide red laughter
Watermelon slice.

The poetry of English tea and muffins germane to the *Ladies' Home Journal* is not, by comparison, quite so interesting. The poetry of Dylan Thomas, for example, seems to tell us more about ourselves than the lady who writes in about the vicissitudes of moving house, whether or not she does so in rhyme. My review, *Poetry in a Grey Flannel Suit*, published in *Poetry London-New York* No. 2, dealt specifically with an anthology of twentieth-century poetry, from the foremost publishers of poetry of that time, as well as with a collection from one of its most articulate spokesmen, which in effect implied that the poetic craft had reverted to Georgianism, both by their choice of poets, and the selection of poems from other poets, whose tone and actual characteristics belong in other categories. I can think of another 'authoritative' anthology in which such pedagogical exercise is rampant: to fit the Georgian category, poets' juvenilia were preferred to their mature, and more representative works.

The essentially *grammarian* idea of metaphor, or word, is not enough. Pound's *Cantos*, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, Dylan Thomas's poems, and Empson's criticism, to mention a few examples, extend the grammarian's linear, lapidary understanding of 'objective' words to include more far-reaching, suggestive, and sensuous elements. Unlike the Technical Philosophers, who delimit the meanings of words in their five-hundred-word articles, so that they resemble bald or closely shaved convicts, we really require an expansion of the meanings of the words, to make language descriptive of what we think and feel. I want a modern style that is moving, satisfying, and convincing; and which reaches out to us as the work of artists in some of the other arts has done.

II

The early issues of *Poetry London* printed the different types, or species, of poets of those times in unnumbered sections. *Poetry London/Apple* will make such distinctions more explicit.

I like to involve the man in the street. *The PL Yearbook of Jazz 1946*, *Jazzbook 1947* (with poems and articles by Louis Armstrong, Langston Hughes, Henry Miller, Nicholas Moore), and the *Ballad Books* (for example, Paul Potts' *Instead of a Sonnet*), indicate a trend I am now following up in the *Apple Magazine* section of this issue. (It was the Beatles' intention before their managerial rift to found an Apple Magazine which was registered under my name, and Apple Books under John Lennon's.)

When I read Ewan MacColl's lyrics for the first time, I got the same editorial kick as I got from Dylan Thomas's *A Saint About To Fall* (called *Poem in the Ninth Month* at the time), or from George Barker's *Six Sonnets from America*, one of which is his much-anthologized sonnet *To My Mother*. I mention in this context the names of Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen. I am *not* suggesting that such writers all belong to the same species. What I am suggesting is that I now have a part of *Poetry London* expressly devoted to songs, lyrics, and poems which I think might be of particular interest to the man in the street.

And now to my most pleasant task, to thank my dear friends without whose encouragement, help, and support, the present publication of this magazine would have been impossible: Robin Waterfield, Michael Harari, Winfred D. Lewis of New York, John and Myfanwy Piper, Iris Murdoch, Harvey Brendon, Graham Sutherland, Lawrence Durrell, Sebastian Barker and Dhiren Bhagat. Jonathan Barker of the Arts Council Poetry Library was the willing provider of information and unobtainable books, and Andrew Mather and Ian Smith of Mather Bros, Preston, its substantial and enthusiastic backers. I am deeply grateful to all of them.

T.

Patrick Alexander

PERDIDO

1

Out of the mouths of your drunken bums,
dead-beats, junkies,
out of the loose words of wasted lives
spring the naked wants, necessities
you have deodorised with scent
and decorated with bright paint.

There on the heap of dung
lies the single unassimilated leaf—
look at its death
and do not let its concept decompose.
Walk any street at night
and sense the unconcern of all the huddled breathing,
this lovely fearful isolation.
The companionable, lonely grate you clatter over
is a gateway to your own pollution.

Out of the factories, skyscrapers, tenement blocks
marring the sunset's sentiment springs
like their shadowing gasps, your very thought.

*

Yet if you leap for the gods' pinnacle in your sport
you shall but fall and to a devil's chasm; the land thereabouts now
is lifeless slithery, and the dragons are extinct—
the gods have vacated Mount Olympus. The citadel
whose walls you wish to batter lies within:
we can climb mountains now, and the gods

Must be invulnerable. The barbed gates
to your own identity are more unconquerable
than any crag; Fight on and wrestle well
with the divine. Only find first
His battleground.

2

I drink again at the fount!
It is the real that floods my dam
and not nostalgia. I dance once more
in my infant's fields, run
in my childhood streets. The great ancient giants with their youth
show me the sweetness and terror of their love,
and no more the bitterness of fictitious age.
I drink now at the fountain,
it was the cistern that I broke and it had rust. The garden
is pristine with clarity and spring,
order with vision is soon regained:
the bells of light ring out—listen
the tenderness; crabbed night has harrowed
but dawn awakes—look, murmur our loves;
'Without contraries is no progression'
and the times are opposite.
It is now joy weeping:
I drink again at the fount.

3

I have been chosen; this handful of dust,
of a beauty another's making, by me marred,
has been selected. From within this rusted armour
the song ascends. The divine I know not
has chosen my heart also for his armoury,
and mind drinks deep and heals. Can I say then
I am not worthy?—I can make no judgement
for the drum cannot beat the drummer. I listen also
as the song unfolds.
I also am loved, and a lover leads
me to the ranks of truth.
Soldier and wounded, I have seen the grail.
I admit thirst
and my soul sips.

4

*'One thing to sing the beloved, another, alas!
that hidden guilty river-god of the blood.'*

—*Third Duino Elegy*, by R. M. RILKE.

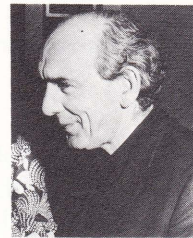
What loving is it now this hidden god
has ruthlessly upthrown? There stands the beloved: made,
says the world, for another man's friendship; yet I, another man,
must love. Not Narcissus; rather, that I dream
we together will in love compact a strength
Samson nor Hercules dreamt of. These subterranean tides,

wherein, fishlike, dwells the god of deepest instinct,
are not for conscious knowing; if shame is felt,
guilt is of the nature of the river, of the god.

Without definition, these tides flow, until
the sky of any other touch the particular drop
to cause that stasis of emotion that channels
all water through its chasm. There is no choice.
And so, whatever this loving, I will relish all discovery,
and savour the ideal and the impossible future.

George Barker

ASTERISKS



In the condition of perfect freedom, as in interstellar space, we would find that we carry no weight.

*

Even balloons are blown hither and thither by laws whose nature only meteorologists and angels, but not balloons, understand.

*

For fishes the surface of the sea is a sky from which the will of god, in the shape of a fish hook, only too sharply descends.

*

Conversely, what opinion does my heart have of me?

*

In the first place only monsters engender enough biological passion to get themselves born. It is because they can and do engender this excess of biological passion that they become monsters. Thus all of us are them.

*

The second mistake is not to be born someone else.

*

If one doesn't take the trouble to sell oneself one very soon finds there is simply no self to sell.

*

If God exists, why do I?

On spring mornings the landscape—farms, the blue and green fields, the feathering trees, the Diana horns of the cattle—looks like a newly finished water-colour from which the easel has been miraculously whipped away.

*

Telephone poles stand around like poets, having nothing to do except pass on messages.

*

I have read prose so exquisite that its fascination, like lace, was to reveal that it merely decorated its own emptiness.

*

Faith works because works invent it.

*

When we listen to the dialogues in the heart of the child what we are hearing is the soul of the man speaking without the conscience. Conscience. 'With knowledge of'—With knowledge of the knowledge of the knowledge.

*

I no longer believe in the salvation of the individual soul because I now believe in the mercy of God.

*

Q: How many battalions has the Pope?

A: Men or Angels?

*

When I reach the river I do not take off my clothes in order to swim across: I do so in order to wash. For I am not curious about the topography of the other side: I am sick of being dirty. What I speak of, you will see, is death.

*

The meaninglessness of intellectual processes cannot demonstrate itself more lucidly than in the spiritual obscurity of its rational clarity.

*

People who go around murdering one another ought not to be surprised when they wake up and find themselves dead.

*

Were it not for the world, the flesh and the Devil it would not be possible to compose a comic opera, to celebrate Mass, or to perceive the *circumstantial* necessity of God Almighty.

Poems honour a reality which does not exist. This is the Platonic world of the paradigm. All things aspire towards the light of the sun, excepting the stars.

*

The heart sits by the river of history fishing for consolations which exist only in its own lovely haemal system.

*

My god, my god, why have I forsaken you?

*

Birth is Death with lots of umbilical strings attached.

*

Sexual love is like a passion for stealing things. Its object is to prove that one desires to own what no one can ever, honestly, possess.

*

O the tears of remorse shed by the tears of remorse!

*

There are spectres of spectres disguised as inspectors. We call such people Moral Philosophers.

*

I would give everything I possess, which is very little, to understand the exact theological difference between the word Why and the word How.

*

When men go to war they go with erections, which is why women do not go, but why they love men who do so.

*

If the Church had not been invented, by sweet Christ! it really would exist.

*

—and what even the murderer is in search of as he mutilates the body of his victims is the unfindable forgiveness hidden in the bowels of everyone else.

*

I have learned that when I feel a speck of dust in my eye it is not that the speck of dust is in the wrong place, but that I am.

At times of great emotional turbulence the soul sits around paralysed, covering its head with its hands because it knows that catastrophes always descend from above, never arise from below.

*

It is now perfectly clear that the last two Great Wars were fought in order to make the world safe for a species determined to commit suicide anyhow.

*

When Sartre explains that the demonstrable non-existence of God embarrasses him, does he ever reflect that his embarrassment demonstrates precisely the opposite, like a schoolboy whose parents fail to turn up on Speech Day? Orphans are not embarrassed. They are at other schools.

*

The whole point about the 'demonstrable non-existence' of God is that this non-existence constitutes simply the obverse of the existence of God.

*

Just as the extraordinary thing about forgetting is that we do not know what it is that we are not remembering, and therefore do not really know that we are, in fact, failing to remember whatever it is that we are forgetting.

*

Is there really a good reason why we should be able to make sense out of the improbable affair of human life? I think of a live snake which I and a friend once trapped in a glass jar and suspended in a violent sea. What sense would or could the wretched thing make out of that?

*

What is odd is not the speculative presence of the transcendental in our affairs, it is the fact that we have had enough good sense to acknowledge the possibility of its inexplicable interventions.

*

If I have toothache I do not go to a meteorologist to have the damned thing out: if it is raining I do not go to a dentist and ask him to stop it. If I need a god I do not expect him to behave like an actor or a conjuror: and if he came on the stage when I clapped my hands he would be both. I expect my god to behave exactly as he does, that is, like a good Headmaster, to manifest himself most of all in his absence.

*

The degree of improbability can only be assessed if we can calculate the incidence of probability. If this probability is not a matter of mathematics but a matter of events devolving from spheres in which mathematics have no application—such as the human emotions—then the law of the improbable ceases to be operative, and we find we possess a heart where,

thank God, anything can happen with just as much likelihood as anything else. In the kingdom of the blind the blind man is king. Or, briefly, the world is not constructed out of mathematics: mathematics is constructed out of our aspirations.

*

Psychology takes its name from the Greek Psyche. From the Latin we derive the parallel term Spiritualism. Does this demonstrate the superior precision of the Greek language or the false premises of the science of Psychology?

*

The only true silence is the silence that can be perceived at the still centre of all words: for they have arisen, as it were, out of the self-conscious and intolerable agony of the silence. The self-conscious and intolerable agony of silence is that of the Vae Victor.

*

Everyone is perfectly right to affirm that they love more than anyone else loves. Their affirmation shows us the absurdity of applying arithmetic to the human emotions. In them, everyone wins, and everyone loses.

*

Conversely, the mother is right to love her child more than she loves other children. If she did not the consequence would be such a confusion of cross purposes that mathematically the logarithm of this love would never work out.

*

I have met women whose eyes were like bedrooms in which one could see oneself lying naked on the bed of one's own unholy sexual dread.

*

The trouble with 'literature' is that it deludes itself into believing that the human affair can be adequately represented by a continual re-arrangement of the twenty-six letters of the alphabet. 'My brother, who exists, and therefore does not have to be put into a poem.' Ah, the serious Sissons!

*

It is only when the sun shines that shadows appear.

*

Poems are like money—you have to earn them by the sweat of the brow, or by selling your only goddam soul or by robbing the Banco di Sancta Spirito.

*

In its voyages among the stars of the invisible universe the soul encounters a single speck of visible dust. and this is the chemically impossible union from which the species takes its origin.

Sebastian Barker

TO MY CHERRY DISMISSIVE

1

To you, sweet love, I offer chills and sweats,
The more you stake on me, the more your losing bets,
Electric, airy neutrons sawing through your chest,
As on your way you walk, now spring is at her best.
I wish you this, and worse, because you say you love me,
Who turned me out, right cold, the stars and moon above me,
Where late men walked, whose loves were not so cellular.
Who do you think you are? Madonna? Muse? The hell you are.
My cherry tree, my warthog, my blazing comely coy
Universal pillow-pretty who did my drunkenness destroy.
Spring leaps, the daffs, the ducks are drinking twos.
See scoop of pool, trees/park, the sky sun/café blues.
Rich treatment here, and you some brown and sulking kitchen
Tease to idolatry, while for our love are itching.

2

No more we can than would were we we worth.
What us might I (I yet yet not) derisively give birth
Reduced to this, this speech, and you my late dismitter?
What did I wrong, what wrong did I (except, dismissed, to kiss her
Who kissèd me, so late-and-soon estranged from we-us-you?
I took her in my arms for she was naked too)?
What us were this? What hearth? What diamond ring?
What couch and blanket? Garden? Bean on string?
I spit I snarl. Of course I do. The course
Of bad to worse, and worse to worse and worse
Is sunflower not, nor jug, nor love's triumphing,
But skittle skattle drib drab boring whine galumphing
From drink to meal, from meal to high finance.
High more I want, but that? Oh I prefer romance.

Dhiren Bhagat

POEM
(For Lucinda Airy)

A bird once said to me:
'Steal the blue of her eye
Paint yourself a travelling sky,
Life's a single non-stop flight.'
And I replied: 'But surely he
Who winds my wings breathes her breath,
Lashes storms her pulse begets.
No. In these winds I cannot fly.'

It simply said:
'Your words are colours that give body to
Airy lies: to these
There is no reply';
Then flew overhead.

FOUR POSES IN A RELATIONSHIP

'Whether he poses or is real, no cat
Bothers to say: the pose held is a stance'
—Gunn

1

Your street at night—black man
ruled by white eyes—is lit.
Thirteen lying lamps I
have clutched, woman, in the hope
they would lead me to your sky.

2

She always kept two sets of books:
The ones who loved her and the ones she loved.
Oh, the beautiful blackmarket of her leaping heart!
Take the cash (said Khayyam) and let the credit go!

3

On the second day he realized he had
Married a Church, in which women gathered.
In its crypt he spent the rest of his days
Looking for the one he knew.

4

Dearest, making sense of chosen words
is counting how many wings
hide the sky.
No. There's more profit in being blind
if it is the sky you want to see . . .
Talk to me.

BLACK LINES ON A BLANK PAGE

Struck at, all I see is flying hair.
The pale straw I thought I'd make my bed
Is angered, flaunts its full sail;
Her gold beats poems on my plain eyes.

The flaxen braids play out their dance.
I feel the white sheet of my ghost and know
(Recalling the fortunes of a flatter time)
Her refusals are strokes that publish weals.

*Woman, you know your shaking head will sting
My stone face in several hundred places,
You will see Justice as you whip and thrash.
O let these lines sing my Innocence!*

LEAP THE CIRCLE

'Yet if I knew
What hoop should hold us staunch . . .'

Leap the circle lucky girl
Luck's a divine disturbance.
All the ponds of Richmond Park
God's disturbed by blowing winds.
Now no more will they reflect an
Image of you I can hold.
Leap the circle lucky girl
Leap the circles you're held in
Leap the circle lucky girl.

Sleeps the serpent in a curl
Leap the circle lucky girl.

Thomas Blackburn

Moritur i

Such beatitudes of water
Where the sedge falls to the sand
In the August sun they glitter
One might think would without end,
But tomorrow the sun may be dark and
The waters running with foam,
But it's all a grace and a
Godsend
And the ~~exiles~~ going home.

Blake said the vegetable cop)
of eternity, this would be,
There humans and flowers and the
oak tree

WHEN

What terror, what sudden dread;
A madman wakes in his straw,
Cold, sweating upright in bed,
A child wakes and watches his door,
As from his cellarage
A mad man climbs up a stair.

But the lunatic cannot come in
To the room of the haunted child,
O, when will it come about,
Eyes skinned so he understand,
That a child, upright, unafraid,
Takes a blind, mad man by the hand.

VENITE

Silence is what the noises are for
As a brightness pin-points the particular
Lightening of the sky we call a star.

It is both ordinary and peculiar
This brevity of being now and here
Where the changes occur.

There being so much objective to change by,
Not that one likes being confined in a body
But to be free of the reaches of death it is a necessity.

Ineffable are the stretches of the eternal,
Of being elsewhere and otherwise they foretell
As they approximate by slow footfall.

Nothing now is indifferent to me
Growing into becoming inevitably,
No glass, no more darkly.

See, see. Each hour nearer
To freedom, the constant wayfarer.
Do the changes continue for ever?

A pause. How strange becoming is.
Forever farewelling from what was,
Passing histories.

Alan Brownjohn

WE ALL PLAY SOMETHING

*Music runs in our family;
Music runs right down the generations.*

I take out the Banjo Tutor from the stool:
Unthumbed after seven pages.

Music runs, etc.

That sound in the next room when we visited
Was a girl cousin, vamping on her own.

Music runs, etc.

My uncle burnished a harmonica on his sleeve;
He was trying to get it to his mouth.

Music runs, etc.

Here is a lost photo of the Black Sheep
Taken posing with a cello.

Music runs, etc.

All this was before recorders, and down the social
Scale from madrigals. We kept to ukeleles.

*But music runs in our family:
It definitely runs in the blood.*

I plug
The organ in, switch on, and run one hand

Benoy Chakraborty

TWO POEMS

1

'I will leave you a song behind when I am gone
And a satchelful of old silver dollars.'
When the poplars shiver in the summer
And the wind sweeps over the willow
The red-robin canoe mirrored in the lake
Moving not moving in the lilac dawn.

When the body has become grass or fine like pine needles
 Crackling in fragrant fire while loons call in the night
 And summer moths alight like chinese lantern
 Night fresh like a breath and cosy like some eiderdown.
 'Think of me. For all that was love has grown.
 All that is lost is redeemed.
 All that was pain is love again.'

2

I know constant grief is fatal
 But my heart cannot help
 To fill up the cup and measure
 With it the ocean.
 You said love was fate
 That death has no name
 But one thing is certain you said
 That sorrow passes and hope
 Is eternal repair
 Like a blade of grass, like a blade of grass.

Phil Davey

THE JEW

Santa Maria la Blanca
 Towers revive like hawks; glare, eastwards,
 From the sun. Regard, Jehovah,
 The purging of the coloured sky. Regard
 Jehovah, the blinding of our tributes'
 Eyes. I am a glass-blower. Today
 I thrashed my stubborn mule, lashed him
 To a post with the rope that beat him;
 Shattered with pain the fragments that punished
 Him. Anger is my furnace. Anger
 Is my breath. Go, Jews, build your temples
 For a gentile's nest! Your fabric, compound
 To their brittle cells. I am cooling, calm,
 Like a glass. Touched like gold tomorrow
 Will buy, gone is the wind of my shaping.



Gerald Durrell

PIG BUSINESS

Percival Perrivale Pontefract Pig
Was a pig with a penchant for prevarications—
Though warned by police and his friends and relations
That this strange predilection would end in disgrace—
(That falsehoods are fine if kept in their place)
But Percival Perrivale Pontefract Pig
Would protest to these people with tears in his eyes
That prevarication was *not* telling lies.

With top hat and false whiskers and cutaway coat
He went to the City and managed to float
A company for turning brass doorknobs to gold
And one for returning penicillin to mould.
A company for making large diamonds from glass
And a factory for making skyscrapers from grass.

Down in the City the bankers adored him.
With every new company they'd fight to applaud him—
Bankers called Gluckwurt and Gleeberveststains
Unterdenfarte and such fine English names
Would bicker and push and get hotter and hotter
In their efforts to press still more cash in his trotter.

Roubles and deutschmarks and lira and francs
Poured into his coffers from large merchant banks;
Kronen and dollars and pesos he found
Were amassed with the ease of the yen or the pound,
While from places uncivilized, lacking real money,
Came cowries, yaks, butter and birds' nests in honey.

He gathered around him in prominent positions
Accountants, economists, young statisticians
(People well known for their lack of frivolity)
And mixed them adroitly with people of Quality.
Retarded young Earls and Dukes that you get
By taking a really fine comb to Debrett.

Now New Scotland Yard viewed his progress askance
(His manor near Stratford, his villas in France,
His yacht at Monaco, his castle in Spain)
And they wished that this pig would go straight down the drain;
But a day and night watch on his Albany flat
Turned up nothing suggestive—so it seemed that was that.

But the Dukes and accountants all got in a dither
 And sent frenzied telegrams hither and thither
 But Percival Perrivale said, 'It's a bore
 This rude interference from men of the law'.
 So returning (sun-tanned) from a sojourn in Greece
 He started a Rest Home for Crippled Police.

He followed this up with a Home by the sea
 For orphans accruing from brave C.I.D.,
 And then, in the Cotswolds, he started a ranch
 For the ones (who could ride) from Police Special Branch.
 And Sir Eggbert Moonfeather (The Chief of Police)
 He had for a month at his villa in Nice.

Then with a gesture that all could applaud
 He elected a Bishop or two to his board.
 The result was the police to the press all admitted
 That the crime they suspected had not been committed.
 They said you could never be left in the lurch
 By Dukes and accountants and men of the Church.

They praised Pontefract for his charm and his piety
 They praised him for honesty, tact and sobriety.
 They said his associates couldn't be beaten
 Brought up, as they had been, at Harrow and Eton.
 For it's 'Only with lower-class people you'd find
 The sort who inherit the true criminal mind.'

Being now rich enough (and the praise being still hearty)
 Our pig now enrolled in the Socialist Party.
 And before very long he was known to the nation
 As kindly Lord Porcine of Prevarication.
 And his autobiography—all they could get—
 Was published in full in the Policeman's Gazette.

But then, in his zeal, he made a mistake:
 He floated a company that *was not* a fake.
 All of his enemies watched him enthralled
 While his team of advisors were simply appalled.
 He'd done the one thing that big businessmen fear
 He'd let honesty ruin a dishonest career.

The bishops he'd got were immeasurably shocked
 At the thought that—in public—they might be defrocked.
 The bankers and Earls wouldn't speak to the press
 The Dukes and accountants all suffered from stress
 The shareholders—worried—removed all their money
 And New Scotland Yard said that 'something was funny'.

So Pontefract Pig by his lapse into grace
 Lost most of his money and a good deal of face.
 At the trial that ensued it was proved beyond doubt
 That to be a success you must not be found out.
 As they jeered, in the gutter-press, after the crash
 'His Lordship's career is now sausage and mash'.

He spent six months in prison, and on his release
 He cruised, in his yacht, round the Islands of Greece.
 And then, a year later, to no one's surprise,
 He turned up again in a different disguise.
 But those in the know think it's really quite sinister:
 He's Financial Adviser to H.M.'s Prime Minister.

Richard Eberhart

A WHACK AT EMPSON

('Just a Smack at Auden' —Empson)

Bill, we are hitting seventy.
 I remember the startling youngster
 Batting ambiguities, your total intelligence
 And vivid undergraduate stances.

You made strutting, peacock pronouncements.
 It was so heady
 Who cared if it was heartless?

You wrote steel-plated poems at twenty,
 You were an original of the tight line,
 You had life tied in a neat bundle,
 No vagabond bag of sticks and tricks,
 Wired to science, accommodating astronomy,
 You were a computer of necessity.

You took words to such refinement
 That they might have been refined away
 But for their explosive integrity,
 Growing to world-clouds even today.

But people were growing,
 Were living and dying
 Calling and crying
 For a mastery of suffering,

They were suffering the flesh
In torments of spirit
And you said nothing to them,
Locked in early literary perfection,

Locked in the early line,
The fine strictures of intellectuality,
You had no heart, no blood,
No sex, no guts, no lust in letters

To grapple with older realities.
The people were suffering,
Trying, living and dying,
But you were not caring.

I was amazed-dismayed,
You allowed
One new line in your *Collected Poems*,
One line to say in your thirties,
While people were living and dying,
In the universal suffering
Crying for assessment of meaning,
A mastery to live by,
You said nothing.

The forties, the fifties, the sixties,
Yours and the century's, pass.
You won at the start of the race,
Made immortal lines at twenty.

Let others suffer, others struggle,
The whole of life go by.
You said, 'It is the pain, it is the pain, endures,'
You said, 'The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.'

These dry, bright, crackling tones
Make you live, although your poetry died.

POSTSCRIPT TO A LETTER FROM RICHARD EBERHART TO THE
EDITOR FROM GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, 22nd JANUARY, 1979

'Glad Bill Emp got an award. I suppose we like what we get, do not know what is coming. I wrote this poem in a rage of belief in 1974 here when first we came to the south, held it out until 1978. I doubt if he will ever see it. I have warmest personal feelings for him, enjoyed our meeting in 1973, but the poem was an absolute necessity to me to say 50 years later.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Sir William (he was knighted this year in the New Year's Honours List) read the poem and sends his very best to Dick Eberhart. They were contemporaries at Cambridge.

'That is a good last line,' he exclaimed characteristically from a sick-bed after he had read it. *The God Approached*, a book published by Chatto and Windus last September should be on every Empsonian's bookshelf for its well-researched and informative introduction. It provides a commentary by Philip and Averil Gardner on fifty-six of the sixty-three poems he has published—a slim output—which is Eberhart's point in the last line of his poem. Empson's main pre-occupation is with criticism and he is currently writing a book on *Faust*.

Ian Watt writes: 'The achievement is great . . . so great that Mr Empson's right to be called the most distinguished literary critic of his generation can hardly now be questioned.'

Previously writing on Empson in his Cambridge days, in *Accent* magazine, Eberhart had this to say of Empson:

' . . . Empson was considered a startling poet by the learned . . . His poems challenged the mind, seemed to defy the understanding; they amused and they enchanted; and even then they afforded a kind of parlour game, whiling away lively hours of puzzlement at many a dinner party. The shock and impact of this new kind of poetry were so considerable that people at that time had no way to measure its contemporary or its timeless value. They were amazed by it.'

THE INVITATION OF THE EVENING

There is a cold mist hovering around the evening,
A stasis as boats lie tied up in the harbour.
We have heard of the calm before the storm,
It is so calm as to be somewhat ominous.

The light darkens after the sun has departed,
You wonder what portends. If lightning,
Like yesterday, you hope it won't kill anybody.
The children are playing badminton in semi-dark.

No good to think of ten thousand years ago.
In those days all the islands were mountain peaks.
Odd to think that I am looking at the same sight
Not seen before man was on this planet.

It is not thought that the ocean is quiet.
It does not look dangerous in the growing evening.
A late gull calls, and a far sea bell.
Pretty soon everybody will be unconscious.

And it didn't matter that the race of man occurred,
Mankind will be sleeping, the ocean will be asleep,
Everything will be a vastness, there will be no poetry,
Silent sea night surrogate for eternity.

Alistair Elliot

REPLY TO A PAINTER

'Our stuff may not be pretty, but at least we've got a Muse.'

—Choerilus of Iasus (*Letter to Apelles*, c. 425 B.C.)

An art of peaceful objects! You make things
 From bits of world, possessions that we keep
 In rooms, or graves, useful like wedding-rings,
 Symbols to guard, and polish, dust, or sweep.
 But poems aren't the paper, cloth, stone, wood.
 They're found between the senses and the pulse.
 In dark pink catchment areas where blood
 Washes the words of men and animals.
 They replicate: the copies are as new.
 We carry them invisibly. They lie
 Unmelted in the mouth through all we do,
 A hundred light as one; and when we die,
 They sweeten, incorrupt, some younger head:
 The immortal public property of the dead.

Gavin Ewart

IN THE RESTAURANT

At the tables there is laughter, where executives are lunching.
 'You're so beautiful!' a man says; there is holding hands (and footlove)
 as the dishes and the egos, with experimental cooking,
 so exaggerate the meetings and the matings of the twosomes.
 All percentages and products are examined in the aura
 of the wine carafes of redness that emblazon on the table
 just the pinkness of the patches where white cloth is wobbled over—
 as the sun that is our sovereign shines enticingly deep through them.

But the lovers and the agents, all of them, demand a profit—
 it may come in cheques, or simply the wet warmth of something fluffy.
 For the laughter and the lovetalk are by no means, here, unselfish,
 there is no one in this world who won't seek his own advantage
 or seek hers (and I must say this); every altruistic action
 is itself a conscience-soother and still has its private audience
 of a God who sits in judgement, or more public approbation.
 All the women stroke men's torsos for their own delight and sharing.

There's a two-way traffic running even in the kissing glances
 of a girl who eyes a loved one over plates of fegatoni.
 Even gold-diggers are giving, in a sense it's all a bargain.
 See the black and busty hustle of the waitresses, good-natured
 in the face of many orders; they are paid, of course, to do it.
 It's so true we all want something—and that something might be someone—
 that the only problem left is: do we do it sad, or gaily?
 Restaurants are no exception, and the whole of life is business.

Ted Hughes

THE ROSE

Unconcerned with men's writings,
 In a dingy corner of her room
 Flames to its petal-fringe, and no further,
 Keeping perfect propriety,
 Its petals not a lyrical cry, like the anguished lily,
 But a muffled thunder of perturbation,
 A coloratura of openings, beckonings,
 The simple, cool eyes, the core hectic.
 Miniature admirers with black legs disport themselves.
 Your picture floats, logical, illogical,
 With flames, with undies, without drapery,
 Wide open, your secret averted
 As the sharp-nosed critic, the puritan
 Rejects the excess of your silks,
 And your abandon, like the needlessness of a parrot,
 Mountain behind mountain, dawn beyond dawn.

TOP WITHENS

Hope squared the stone
 And laid these roof-slabs, and wore the way to them
 With a pioneer eye.

How young that world must have looked!
 The hills full of savage promise.

Here climbed the news
 Of America's rich surrender—the wilderness
 Blooming with cattle, wheat, oil, cities.

The dream's fort held—
 Stones blackening with stubborn purpose.
 But at the dead end of a wrong direction.

And the skylines, howling, closed in —

Now it is all over.

The wind swings withered scalps of souls
In the trees that stood for men

And the swift glooms of purple
Are swabbing the human shape from the freed stones.

HAPPY CALF

Mother is worried, her low, short moos
Question what's going on. But her calf
Is quite happy, resting on his elbows,
With his wrists folded under, and his precious hind legs
Brought up beside him, his little hooves
Of hardly-used yellow-soled black.
She looms up, to reassure him with heavy lickings.
He wishes she'd go away. He's meditating
Black as a mole and as velvety,
With a white face-mask, and a pink parting,
With black tear-patches, but long
Glamorous white eyelashes. A mild narrowing
Of his eyes, as he lies, testing each breath
For its peculiar flavour of being alive.
Such a pink muzzle, but a black dap
Where he just touched his mother's blackness
With a tentative sniff. He is all quiet
While his mother worries to and fro, grazes a little,
Then looks back, a shapely mass
Against the South sky and the low frieze of hills,
And moos questioning warning. He just stays,
Head slightly tilted, in the mild illness
Of being quite contented, and patient
With all the busyness inside him, the growing
Getting under way. The wind from the North
Marching the high silvery floor of clouds
Trembles the grass-stalks near him. His head wobbles
Infinitesimally in the pulse of his life.
A buttercup leans on his velvet hip.
He folds his head back little by breathed little
Till it rests on his shoulder, his nose on his ankle,
And he sleeps. Only his ears stay awake.

Elizabeth Jennings

BACKGROUNDS

Look at the backgrounds of
These paintings. See how Tuscany is shown
With cypresses which move
Up stairs of hills. In a child's Italy,
You thought, trees are not grown

Like this at all but that
The artist stitched embroidery of trees
And landscapes. You stare at
The largesse of the whole Renaissance as
You hide now from the heat

Of the siesta which
Belongs to lizards and cicadas who
Dart about in rich
Sun-falls. And now you watch the evening grow
Stitch after careful stitch.

A FRAGMENT ABOUT WATER

First, think of a pool.
Toss a stone in it and notice the circles
And indignant ducks objecting.

Next, think of a river
Crowded with punts and swimmers but having also
Peaceful spots for the fishermen.

Imagine a lake, deep, dark, tideless,
A place where a poet wandered and felt the pulse
Of this planet. You too know

How to be silent. Now you are certainly going —
In your mind at the moment, remember —
Towards the sea, boisterous, treacherous
But one of gentle moods, of rock-pool peace.

In and out go the tides
Rather like life, a sort of biography.
You are the fall and pluck of the waves and the rise

Afterwards. You envy the gull whose skill
 Outwits the assertive sea.
 Here is pleasure under pale-blue skies.
 Here is your reason to be.

Keith Jones

THE WALK

So over your shoulder man look carefully
 There is no light there Its absence
 Though is It shadows you its hunger
 Gobbling in the space your quickening walk
 Trades in for time A bad bargain that
 It will get to know you soon Gobbling near
 Nearer a bloated dwarf eating at your feet
 YOU CAN NEVER TREAD THIS DARKNESS DOWN
 It steps inside you Now IT is striking YOU
 Outwards and each step is staining more
 YOU CAN NEVER HOLD THIS DARKNESS BACK
 As the sun falls aslant your neck the day
 Hanging behind you It grows from your feet
 Blackening your tread and lengthening until
 It reaches the horizon and then stands up
 A black noose in its black hand tightening
 As it walks towards you Its great gut swelling

And then when then the lantern moon moon moon
 Comes out it begins all over again



Christopher Logue

SINGLES

1

Where are you going?
Down the road.
What to do?
To change the world.
Why do you want to change the world?
Because I cannot change alone.

2

Last night in London Airport
I saw a wooden bin
labelled UNWANTED LITERATURE
IS TO BE PLACED HEREIN.
So I wrote a poem
and popped it in.

3

If the nightflights keep you awake
I will call London Airport and tell them
to land their dangerous junk elsewhere.

And if you fall asleep with the sleeve
of my jacket under your head,
sooner than wake you, I'll cut it off.

But if you say:
'Fix me a plug on this mixer,'
I grumble and take my time.



Federico García Lorca

Two Ballads from *Romancero Gitano* (Gypsy Ballads)

BALLAD OF THE BLACK SORROW

(To Jose Navarro Pardo)

While the pickaxes of the cocks
 Are piercing to the break of day,
 Down the dark mountain, Soledad
 Montoya takes her lonely way.
 Of yellow copper is her flesh,
 Of horses and of shade she smells.
 Smoky anvils are her breasts
 Groaning songs as round as bells.
 —‘Soledad, whom do you seek
 At such an hour, alone, at night?’
 —‘Let me search for whom I like
 What does it matter in your sight?
 I’ve come to seek the thing I seek,
 My person and my own delight.’
 —‘Soledad of all my sorrows,
 Like a stampeding horse that raves
 And when it meets the sea at last,
 Is swallowed outright by the waves!’
 —‘Do not remind me of the sea
 Which my black sorrow weeps and heaves
 Over the country of the olives
 Under the rumour of the leaves.’
 —‘Soledad, what a grief is yours!
 In what a piteous woe you waste!
 You weep the bitter juice of lemons,
 Bitter in yearning as in taste.’
 —‘Oh what a grief! like one gone mad
 All day I run the house around.
 Between the kitchen and the bedroom
 My two long pigtails sweep the ground
 What sorrow! I am going black
 In body as in my attire.
 Alas my little vests of lace,
 The poppies of my thighs on fire.’
 —‘In the fresh water of the larks
 Refresh your body, and release
 Your weary heart, Oh Soledad
 Montoya! to repose in peace.
 Away, down there the river sings,
 The skirt-flounce of the skies and leaves.

Crowning itself with pumpkin flowers
The new light rustles through the sheaves.
Oh sorrow of the gypsy people!
Clean sorrow, lonely as a star!
Oh sorrow of the hidden fountain
And of the daybreak seen afar!

Translated by Roy Campbell

SAINT RAPHAEL (Cordoba)
(To Juan Inquierdo)

I

Along the riverside of reeds
Closed carriages assemble, where
The waves are polishing the bronze
Of Roman statues brown and bare.
Carriages that the Guadalquivir
Portrays upon her ancient glass
Between the colour-plates of flowers
And thunders of the clouds that pass.
The lads are weaving as they sing
The disillusion of the world
Around the ancient carriages
By the encroaching darkness furled.
But Cordoba stirs not, nor trembles
Under the mystery they invoke,
Since, if the darkness were to shift
The architecture of the smoke,
With marble foot she reasserts
Her glory spotless and severe.
A flimsy petal-work of silver
Encrusts the breeze so grey and clear
Above the great triumphal arches
Displayed upon the atmosphere.
And while the bridge sighs out its ten
Reverberations of the sea,
Contrabanders of tobacco
Between the broken ramparts flee.

II

A single fish within the water,
 It links two Cordobas and joins
 The gentle Cordoba of reeds
 To that of architraves and groins.
 Lads with expressionless blank faces
 Along the bank strip to the skin
 Apprentices of Saint Tobias
 And belted rivals of Merlin,
 To tease the fish with taunting queries
 Whether it would prefer more soon
 Red splashes of the flowers of wine
 Or acrobatics of the moon.
 But the fish-bridge that gilds the water
 And makes the marble dark and solemn,
 Instructs them in the equilibrium
 Of a solitary column.
 The Archangel, arabianised,
 With gloomy spangles all around,
 In the mass-meeting of the waves
 Sought out a cradle in their sound.

A single fish within the water.
 Two Cordobas in beauty clear.
 Cordoba broken into streams.
 Cordoba heavenly and austere.

Translated by Roy Campbell

Caitlín Matthews.

THE WOMAN OF BEARE

In ancient legend, the Woman of Beare was an Irish Goddess; by the ninth century she had re-emerged as a nun dissatisfied under the Christian dispensation. These poems show her in both her aspects.

(i) SACRED

An unnatural thing: hurrying east of west.
 The yeast of me scurrying widdershins.

All things speed deosil: caught each wing,
 Beached each fin: fraught with sin.

Ploughs point North—seed toil in stars.
Uncoiled, each ragged weed dies haggard.

My grianan's south where suns uncover
A nun's despair—youth's disrepair.

I'll make no journey east! Bright my hopes once;
This sky lends distance to my sight, my self-reproach.

I'll coax the western wind, scull his tides on each approach
To my islanded west and a homely coast.

(ii) PROFANE

I who am Anu, Bui and Brigid
Sit anchored to a fireside.
Despite the clerics' ire,
I am one who sinned well.

The four winds in my bag:
Each tower they'll topple down to hell.
Unleashed, my curses fluently
Will quell each cloistered hag.

And saints now chaste and virgin
I'll corrupt; each pilgrim sell
His relics to embrace a nun,
The culdee slakes his fast on sturgeon.

All kinds of sexual sport and harmless fun
I will let loose. No innocents
May plead exception: at every airt
I'll make them seem degenerates.

They'll lip no creed, in every part
The quiet clip of thigh and heart—
The paters and the aves die
In homage to my faithful craft.

John Matthews

IN THE THEATRE OF SOCRATES

'... he was travelling to Ionian shores,
to empty shells of theatres
where only the lizard slithers over the dry stones.'

— *Seferis.*



Engraving by Michael Ayrton.

Down there, at the centre of the amphitheatre,
like a broken finger of stone
or a phallic symbol,
a granite pillar stands,
its shadow cutting the circle
like the pointer of a sundial.
When it reaches that rock,
a little to the left—
which has somehow acquired the face
of a grimacing satyr—at that time
one of two events will occur:
either I shall die, falling like a stone
from the height of this sunfractured rock;
or else the scattered remains
of statues, pillars, arches,
will grow out of the earth again,
and something terrible
that waits for me in the shadow
below the standing pillar
will come forth to haunt me—

and I shall begin the long pilgrimage again.

Claire McAllister

BEACHCOMBER



Waves of brain waking like the sea's to the moon
I saw them walking, dunes echoing their speech
Those who followed the scent of Light like the hound
Heedless on the track of dangerous secret
And I walking where all story smiled a tragic frown
Like the sea, washing reason out of reach
They were fishers of men, white of waves their gowns
And I crying at the light of O world to be breached
Not follow! it were to drown, but what no sceptic can spell
Is of lights on silent dunes telling more than men can teach
And Dante's halls flashing from an empty mussel-shell.

The unholy ghostly air of spent summer spume
Of sea-leavings, scale bones hard underfoot
Was keen as to enter any bolted room
Waking that past the five senses till opiate root
I'd beg to forget like my own someday tomb
The calm air handed me daring earthly loot
Till swam about me all bright Hell's jewels
With no foil, I, but beachcombing underfoot
And the shell of an empty mussel flashing Heaven's roof.

Iris Murdoch

TOO LATE

What has she got left for her old admirer
After a lifetime wed to the usurper?
When he was young he dreamed of being solitary;
The real aloneness later was another matter.
He needed then the thought of how she cried
At their brief meetings, and he carefully
Wrote the veiled letters which she not forbade,
Where high hopes hinted at were not denied.
His bright hair faded to a parching grey
And started to fall out. She never strayed;
Some cruder matters were not spoken of
In the long conversation of their love.
Even their doubt was of obscure intent.
Death was not quick to take the thug away,
That death upon which they were both so bent
In a laconic upright sort of way.
(He thought, she's too discreet even to pray!)
Did he observe her sadness with some glee,
Savour the sense of her wild discontent,
Doleful and damned inside the situation?
Did guessing at her grief bring consolation
During his studied patience? Naturally he
Felt at her ruined life some satisfaction,
Could not be reasonably refused a gloat
About that ancient and disastrous error
Which she repented of over and over,
Her failure to choose this instead of that,
Which should have been dead easy! Yes, indeed,
Gloats he and checks, achieves no resignation.

Hard to remember now the early grace
 Of love's unselfish rapturous elation.
 Years passed in which he saw her lovely face
 Lose all its quick response, grow desperate
 Thickened and low, a sort of blinded look.
 Grief is a secret worm, and even he,
 He felt it crossly, was shut out.
 Better perhaps. She would not later brook
 What he might then have witnessed: better not to see.
 Quite slowly she has made her terms with fate.
 Her early charms disintegrate and sag.
 She drinks a lot and has put on weight.
 Objectively, she has become an old bag.
 'Of course you're older, dear, but beautiful
 At least to me,' he tells a tearful smile.
 Life is a matter of choosing, *ergo* of losing,
 They formulate when feeling philosophical.
 Thank God at least no bloody kids arrived,
 Doubtless because. He keeps a tactful style,
 A sort of grim ironical gentleness
 Being the atmosphere in which they have survived.
 Letters, occasional meetings near her home
 In office hours, as if by accident,
 No travelling, an always urban scene,
 And public, as if that meant innocent.
 He has died in those tea shops, later in bars.
 (They have lived through quite a lot of social change.)
 Oh God, he was so young when it began, how strange, how strange,
 How worst of all that his own schemes
 Were what destroyed his youth and his good looks
 And his light heart and high IQ
 And all those splendid dreams!
 He might have written books, if she
 Had been his wife, he would have made his mark;
 Or if he'd had the sense to chuck her at the start,
 And look for someone else, or just be free.
 But vile emotions blocked his larger view
 And early bafflement quite needlessly destroyed his life.
 He turned to making money, even that
 With only moderate success. His little flat
 (To which she never came) is mean,
 Provisional, just like a student's den.
 Planning some final transformation scene,
 He never bothered to try out his taste.
 His hi-fi is unplayed, his books are chaste.
 When all is makeshift art cannot bring peace.

At later times they talked about the south
And how they'd run away perhaps to Greece,
A place where tender veins of pebbles shine
In the still sea through deep transparent water.
At least in Maytime in an English field
To lie in buttercups he once besought her,
(The old swine being established as elsewhere
Fishing or something, Christ he didn't *care*!)
To get away right out of London just for once
By car for half a day. She hovered.
He ground his teeth and never quite forgave her.
Now he is testy, she apologises.
Sometimes she would be sulky did she dare.
Their tragic story holds no more surprises.
He plays at leaving but can go nowhere.
At the longed-for last he has gained a ghost.
She timidly proposes this and that.
Can they start life anew? What life and how?
He stays on in his flat and wants no changes now.
Does he desire her? No. The welcome death
Emancipates it seems, not her but him.
Even at this late hour he'll have some fun.
Now that his sacrifice is over and proved vain
He won't be fooled again, he's not yet done.
What is she crying for, her vanished youth?
I too was beautiful when I was young.
Or is she crying for that bloody man,
For her dead husband, for the real one?

FOX

When coldness blanches the blue sky
And the broken bracken arch
Bends beneath its crystal rind,
Every rifted mound
Cross-gartered golden-brown,
And the earth parched and dry
And the frost is scattered there
Wind-refined in the chill air:
My footstep creaks in grasses,
Quietness makes me stare
While in a woodland space a sudden fox
Peers with his brilliant face, and passes.

NO SMELL

A saint upon a mountain stair
 Concerned with other things attracted birds
 Who roosted there inside his cell.
 He all abstract in prayer, his evening candle
 Kindled a set of sleepy jewel eyes.
 It was the scent of goodness cast the spell
 Which simply ceased one day when he
 At last enlightened came to be
 A perfect man without a smell.

When the birds went he did miss them somewhat.
 Still, there were no more bird-droppings
 In his cooking pot.

GUNNERA

A bulky thing I buried in December
 Like a huge fudge with tentacles upon
 Or a dead puppy dog
 On a dim yellow day as I remember
 Digging the stiff clay like a funeral
 Cringed in the freezing fog
 Has lifted up fantastical in May
 A vast rain forest dome
 Of crinkled dew-bedizened leaves a grove
 Out of that wet and admittedly weighty blob
 Defeat of gravitation
 By genial mix of seed and sod
 And formal demonstration of
 The accuracy of God
 His green grotesque imagination.

EDIBLE FUNGI

In a muffled wood in a mauve gauze haze
 The ground random and dumpy with the cold winter days
 Frilled up and frozen in brittled seas of ooze
 Our dull footsteps
 Crackle the plates of ice in muddy jars
 The prints of horses' hooves.

In groups exotic the fastidious
Fungus has posed its small household
Tawnyish pink and white
Graceful as sudden girls, fragile as shells
Or wings its dim gills
Gratuitously bodied out of night
Instant and frail this alien flesh
Ephemeral, from underneath the frost
And wet womb of the cold.
Now from the pan slimy as fish
Slithering darkly in their own ink
We eat water and earth.
The clean taste of blackness salutes the tongue.

Philip O'Connor

THE BRITISH IN MEMORIAM

You brittle battle-fried remnants
I have a hatred for your souls, pussies,
because you locked me in so long
I nearly died of your pomp, remnants
of a frog-marching empire.

My loathing is a disk
of sulphur yellow
my meanness is my task
of belittling you whenever I can
fried carcasses of brutality
pimps of fortune
cunts of Fame.

Are you not arduous
in the targetry of my loathing
don't I ennoble you far beyond
your present comic deserts? I do,
and so to do have been corrupted by you into thinking
that you live whereas—
oh habeas corpus of the wastepaper basket!

The blue moon declines. The sun will incline
his merry meadow on tomorrow's face
and tears may scar;
I return too to the stars
which have never let me down; even in your tin sky
I saw them sigh for larger fields of cognisance
than were within your dull provenance.

Every other thing but you I loved
and so did Wordsworth, too English to be British.
You craned your forensic neck to spy and spear
my loves; you mouthed duties, like an hysterical dentrifice
you spumed the rhetoric of your momentous vacancy.

And now the world begins to be amused at you, barbarians
and brutes without power, as locked within your iron embrace
doodles of your past you trace. I must not resurrect you
into the importance of even my loathing.
I must let you, a sleeping dog,
lie; and lie again.

Wimereux, 1974

POEM

If you have a natural voice: what is that? Let it be.
It is in the vocal apparatus; english cannot be my natural voice.
'English' (englische) is an ugly word to me; anglais is not.
English cooks badly in the mouth—there are drops of sauces
splashed about, there is chumping of chops
and sizzling of fats, and burning? Will the so-called metaphor
sustain that? Let it be.

Anglais is more singing; french suits my vocal apparatus,
though I do not speak or write it at all well;
but it is more comfortable in my throat,
and maybe Hindi or spanish would be even more comfortable.

If english is not my natural language
I carve it as I write it; it is hard
and must be cut, shaped, 'dressed', and sent out
in sensible convoys nosing their way through, in fact,
those oceans of the english mind
wherein strange fish dwell—don't annoy them.

Whereas the french—glass marbles with pretty whorls
ride down the alleyway in the sunset.

Yet because english is not my natural language
I am more aware in it of the wild call,
I spoke it until I was three years old, not much beyond the call stage,
and the mind put on it briefly but firmly must have been with the
childish french I spoke until I was seven years of age.

English is ardent and calling
english seeks to woo, either out of itself or to attract another;
english is the call of the uncontented,
always aspiring, like Romantic music,
never finally stating, sometimes religiously affirming.

It is the language of poetry, of world poetry,
because it calls to reason to save it from regression,
calls to light to save it from darkness;

I love english.

Uzés, 1978.

Brian Patten

FRIENDS

I met them in bars and in railway stations
and I met them in borrowed rooms
and at bright gatherings,
and often enough
I met them with misgivings and doubts,
and misinterpreted what they said
or did not understand at all or understood so well
no explanations were needed.

And still, for all this,
I kept on losing them.

And changes took place and things
that had seemed extraordinary and out of reach
became the earth's most obvious gifts,
and the world slowed down, and I began
to meet them less and less.

Then I learned how the exodus from this place is not scheduled—
at times the young leave before the old
and the old
are left gaping at their fortune.

This is the story
I tell strangers while I am waiting
(bags full of old letters, miracles, junk)
to be gone.

ONE SENTENCE ABOUT BEAUTY

When something vanished from her face,
When something banished its first light
It left a puzzle there,
And I wanted to go to her and say,
'It's all imagining and will change,'
But that would have been too much a lie,
For beauty does reach some kind of height
And those who hunger for her now tomorrow might
Have a less keen appetite.

Alan Perry

LIGHTSHIP

through the gap in the curtains
above the stark mound of my feet
above rooftop and spire—
pin-prick of light
there and not there
flashing like the first idea

side to back
head to head on the pitch-black pillow
in the shipwreck of our room
still in the dark we lie
you asleep and I awake
and watching

its wild dot-dash—
cold and mute, erratic as a star
lighting and not lighting
the second the minute the hour . . .

dense nights of loneliness
and desperate collisions

Simon Piercey

FAIRY-TALE OUT OF SCHOOL

(All the world's a stage
Let us, like Alice,
Fall through the trap door)

We met with the poet
Whose symbols were charged
To electrocute the truth

On his desk
A molotov mixed metaphor

Figments of imagination
Strewn everywhere

We met with the poet
Who met with the poster:

'Join the sleeping army
Your vacuum needs you'

Our voices plunged into silence
At dawn the sun will be shot

The sun that beat down
Over a thousand years
Of sorrow and tears

A thousand stifling
atmospheres

The wind executes an innocent rose
Nature turns in her grave the city

We met with the poet
Who reading the poster replied:

'But I have a wife and two fairies
At the bottom of my garden'

We met with the poet
Who met with the world

'O The mirth of trampling
Snails to death
In C minor!

Seven league boots
vomit
The miles and miles
Of desolation
and
Face value'

We met with the poet
Who met with

Coffins full of has-beens

The undertaker
On his hind legs
Begging for bones

We met with the poet
Whose fingers cast shadows
On a blank sheet of paper

The photograph of silence



Robert Pollett

HOMO EXVAGANS

Incerte errat animus, praeter propter vitam vivitur.

—Ennius (239–169) *Dramatic Fragments*

In the trelliced blue a vine climbs
Tendrils wave in the air
Never reaching the sky.

I feared in the depth of the afternoon
That they would touch,
As I sank deeper in the artificial air
Of my uncontrollable dream.

I, a small world magnified
Under a thick ancient glass,
The orange sun slowly smoking
The axletree of my revolving
To a crisp new cinder.

*

I, mumbled, I
At the moment of disintegration
When they murdered in the fish-market
And the melodramatic barmen
Laughed and rinsed their glasses
In that walled red room
Where the air was a yellow desert.

*

I, muttered, no:
Impertinent tiger
Striating the glare
Grinning in the heat
Of my own sleep.

*

Enter they said
As a fish or a tongue
A new world
You cannot yet understand
Or stand in the cruel eye of the sun
Drinking saliva
Driving the vehicle of your brain
Across known frontiers.

*

How could I believe
Those erratic shadows
Which melted in my eye
And took on the laughing shapes of my hand.

*

A small bird in my vineyard
Grasping an electric wire
Entwined me with a tendril of sound:
'Will you not listen to your echo?
Will you not echo what I sing?'
I am liquid said the bird, become me
I am skin said the fish, feel me
I am gentle said the snake, stroke me
I am nothing said the heat, hold me
I am fire said the sun, embrace me.

*

I awoke suddenly like a child,
Smelling of sleep.
Nothing had changed.
A tendril coiled in the air.

My arms over my eyes
I walked out of the door
Into the heat of the garden

The sun was magnified above me
I was slowly turning in axis,
Awake, I was dreaming
As the garden floated past me

And I touched the gentle sky
With my arms' thin vines
Tentacles above me
And all manner of being.



Paul Potts

I'M NOT WHITE, I'M IRISH

To the memory of Patrick Kavanagh and George Orwell

I believe,
 I saw Christ dance with Mary Magdalene
 and drink a pint of ale
 In Islington with Thomas Paine.
 The talk concerned on both occasions how
 The poor in all their majesty
 Would come one day to reign upon this earth.
 So write it and in verse
 as plain as plain can be
 and should the Muse refuse her grace
 Retreat to prose so charged with meaning,
 Feeling, ecstasy are hurt
 That the adverbs somersault across the verbs
 and dance before the reader's heart,
 For love is God and God is love
 while all the rest is merely dross
 and ne'er the two shall parted be
 unless you want to live a lie
 on the dark side of the grass.

There are echoes here of Yeats and Pound
 But there are echoes in their own work too

of Attica and Tuscany
 That reached beyond a Sligo river
 and got as far as Idaho.

Craig Raine

POEM

The lighthouse is insomniac,
 he says, and I can believe him:

its sleepy staircase
 turns forever,

unable to settle down.
 To pass the time, he knits

all kinds of patterns
 and embroiders equations

on the lighthouse computer.
 It memorises everything,

a bottom drawer full
of phantom baby things.

He shows me a garden
through his telescope—

wearing its greenhouse
like an engagement ring . . .

Kathleen Raine

MY MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY (7th November, 1880)

I

November rain with thin fingers tapping
In the wind-gusts against my window-pane,
You have not changed since, nearly a century ago,
Curled in her cot, my mother heard you about the house,
New-born to the familiar strangeness of wind and rain,
Earth's chill northern winters hers; only a mile or two away.
But I whom tonight you summon am not she
Who in my turn have heard your wordless elemental voices.
You are what you always were, but we
Do not return, though a myriad follow us;
Our drops of life a destiny, our tears
Fall not from the ever-forming and re-forming mist
That blows about the hills, but from the clouds
Of another mystery: we love, we die.

II

I used to watch you, sleeping,
Your once brown shining ringlets grey.
It was your way to lie,
Your knees high, your old twisted hands
In the archaic posture of the unborn,
Raised to your pillow; and I could see
How in the cradle you had lain
For comfort of your own warmth curled up
Like those poor children covered by the robin
With leaves, or under blanket of snow the snowdrop.
Your neglected childhood told its story
In the way you composed yourself for the grave.
Why had not your mother, bending over her baby,
Ninety years ago, wrapped you warm?
I, your daughter, felt pity
For that unwanted babe, for comfort too long ago, too far away.

COLUMBINES

Finding in a friend's garden columbines
It was as if they were those my mother grew,
And above all those coloured like a shell
Of rosy pearl seemed hers,
Returned, in all their freshness, from her garden
To remind me of, it should have been, happy days
When I was sheltered by her love and shared her flowers.
But by the vague bitter sorrow that arose
Out of the shadowy present of the past
I knew that it had not been so.
Wilful and unloving had been the daughter
My mother made, and all her flowers in vain
Offering of her life to mine.
What did I hope to find when I turned away from her
Towards a cold future, now my sum of years,
From the unprized only love earth had for me,
Demeter's for her lost Persephone?



MARCH POEMS

The curlew knew today
Advent of spring; they
Cry their wild cry
Whose human word is joy.

*

Soft, soft sound of wings
In multitude, starlings
Low over my house pass.

*

You who have gone
Beyond the horizon of time,
I watch the winging geese passing
From here to far, and seem
Travelling north to you again.

*

Evening
Clouds in the westering sun turn
Bright their golden lining not from
But towards where I sit alone.

*

Great wavering skein of geese returning
North: life yet again risen. I listen
To news of destruction and wonder when
For the last time spring.

SWEDENBORG'S ANGELS

The east
Is ever before their faces:
Turn where they will their sun rises
Here and now always, They cast
No future nor past.
In the beginning the light,
And they in their beginning dwell
While visions in succession pass and pass
Before the eye that beholds everywhere all.

Anne Ridler

JYNX TORQUILLA

A spell in the Air

In fallow winter days I remember
Jynx, jynx, the wryneck's call.

Not as the cuckoo's mate, but an August passenger
Blown off course, perhaps,
It stopped by, the husbandman's reward
For leaving ants about in the garden.

Its head, as though on stretched elastic
Wobbled slightly as it flew
(The neck, they say, writhes like a snake in courting.)
Its plumage, colour of gnarled bark
Speckled with lichen,
And sticky tongue, lethal to ants,
Were ours to watch, while the feast lasted;
Then it took off, for Africa.

Jynx, jynx, I heard you cry.
For this, witches would catch and bind you on a wheel
To draw the souls of men on invisible threads,
And turning, screeching, with your spell—
Jynx, jynx—
Recapture faithless lovers.



Victoria Rothschild

TO FINN

A child alone cries at night
his eyes wide open, wild with fright.
The spectres of the dark will haunt him
for he is motherless to avaunt them.
The noises of a leaf on bough
are triple terrors to him now,
they're fingers at the windowpane
which will not leave but still remain
to torment and fright and scratch
this poor young child who lies in watch.
But who can take his grief away
it must remain, it has to stay.
It is the grief that you were born for.
It is yourself that you must mourn for.

WATERLOO

On that day the crowd was kneaded together
caked in each other's rust
secretaries mouth hollows to each other
while others swim into the bowl
I, slumped in some shrunken corner,
fish for faces or facts.
A hand is pressed against the glass
pink and white like raspberry fool
and my white face flecks dustily back from someone's blackmac.

On that day the doors peel open
and the cut out paper pattern pieces
unfold on to the platform
I am unseated, unpacked at last.
This tailored maid, pared to bone
hand-painted, trims to the surface
scrapes past rot and mould
pruned and cheapened yet
and clears the barriers of glass.

On that day on the cut
my life runs with laughter and tears
the fantasy child of freedom
I imagined in my youth
has grown old into a tramp
fifty quid in my pocket
is just scrumpled paper
no greenbacks now but hounded destitution
it is I that am engraved and castrated.

On that day too a tramp, an old wanderer, picked flowers
and pinned them carefully to his old raggedy coat.
An old lady doubled under her burden—
five full plastic bags and a rucksack—
she would die rather than part from this.
Sirens skin the street
and I find it too dramatic to jump off the bridge
and sit, trying to outstare a cat, on the edge
watching my bleeding feet.

On that day then this dot has an adjunct too
on that day this dot becomes a line
on that day I spent at Waterloo
on that day that day of mine
that day that day
the day they took me away.

Bernard Saint

VICTOR JARRA

Ripples and shadows now his music,
Winter tree, all fingers severed,
his guitar.
The hands of Victor Jarra are in silence.
The voice of Victor Jarra is in air.

In the special interrogation unit,
Under the electrodes,
And under rubber truncheons,
It is not enough to crush
The heart, the mind, the genitals
Of the artist.
Somehow nothing is enough.
Death itself has joined the Party.

The day that Victor Jarra died
 Rod Stewart flew to Heathrow from L.A.,
 White fox fur on his shoulders,
 That week's starlet on his arm.
 And *Vogue* published a lush edition on 'Love'
 For silken, totally trivial, sensibilities.
 At a Hammersmith Odeon concert Eric Clapton
 Gave support to racist policies
 Whilst drunk on stage, in the very act
 Of ripping-off black music.

Dylan stalked in denim through his Malibu Beach mansion
 With songs of domestic crisis for hi-fi literati,
 Hassidic texts fell from his workroom wall.
 My spies are everywhere. The times are changing.

The day that Victor Jarra died
 There spoke another music,
 Severed fingers strummed barbed wire,
 Thunder overhead, a burst
 Of automatic fire.

PERSPECTIVES IN THE ARTS

A sparrow flew into the seminar—
 Batter of wingtip on grey wall and glass—
 'My apologies, fellow artists,' said the sparrow,
 —with just a little whistle of Coltrane—
 'Birds have no knowledge of windows.
 Barriers between the seer and the seen
 Are strictly a human phenomena.'

And 'Art is dead,' the pipesucker said,
 Ignoring the jazzbeaked bird,
 'It ended with Dada.
 The media massage the mind in a vacuum
 With empty images, with a terminal culture.'

'I think it ended with windows,' opined the sparrow.
 Bare twigs lashed the glass
 We plucked discursive petals.
 'And you, my fine unfeathered friends,
 I liken unto jackals at your own entrails
 Trying to decipher the Rose you ate for supper.'

With this he blew into the microphone
 A chorus I can only liken to Parker's 'Cherokee'
 Produced by Phil Spector in a Himalayan sanctum.
 In the vernacular of the streets, gentle reader,
 We flipped
 As the windows folded like crushed ice in a giant Coke-Bacardi.

'This song won't need
 Your tired proposals how to grow,
 Since it breaks your boundaries!'
 The sparrow sniggered in high C.
 The walls fell down around us

Peter Scupham

SUMMER PALACES

How shall we build our summer palaces?
 Will the girls bring us sherbet, and our gardens
 Brown to the filigree of Chinese lanterns?

The Emperor speaks in a long robe of thunder,
 Bruising us cloudily; his combs of rain
 Dance out a dance of more than seven veils.

Islands of bird-music; storm voices dwindle.
 Across the blue, cirrus and alto-cirrus
 Draw out an awning for our shade pavilion.

Swallows will sew our flying tents together.
 We live as nomads, pitching idle camp
 Under the white sheets blowing down the line,

Or swing on ropes to somersaults of grass.
 The hasps creak upon our airy gallows,
 Roofed by light, floored by a crush of earth.

The strong leaves curtain us; we know each scent,
 The deep breaths taken behind swaying curtains.
 We have become the citizens of green.

Our walls grow strong in fruit and knots of seed.
 A dandelion clock rounds out the hour,
 Blowing our time away in feathered segments.

The night lies warm upon a wall of shadows.
 We lie as naked on our drifting beds
 As the close moon, staining us with silver.

Harry Smith

OF SHAD AND MEN

(extract from *Trinity*, a modern epic poem in the making)

In Maine, late spring at Northeast Harbor, the cottage of the
lilacs in the night that night, of conception. Yes, God, conception.

Hamilton felt sure he knew. That night—the simple
wildness—must have been

Ago.

work, fame future
daughterwoman. Hamilton felt listless.
a spent shad.

The shad were journeying
up the river to the Hudson Highlands,
more shad than people
in the city, to spawn
in waves the generations of the shad
and the generations of man and the great May
run of the lilac

shad rack

Me shad?

shad roe—How did it go? Hamilton
didn't know much

about popular music.

'Shadrach, Teshach, Abednego,' Old Petie answered.

Hamilton realized that he had spoken or sung aloud. Embarrassing.

He put a dollar on the counter and left, feeling Awkward.

Across the street, Southeast, another razed
corner, Greenwich & Liberty, littered; three young clerks played catch with a football;
crabgrass was coming-in-strong before the dig, ailanthus jungling along a back boundary.
The tree of Heaven flourished always, in ash and rubble of inner city, its blighted places and
untended yards abandoned to that lush redemption. Hamilton found curious poignancy in
the life of the vacant lot. He thought of wild raspberries, how they grow, best prospering in the
shelter of decaying homesteads and collapsed barns and sheds and out of rusty derelict
vehicles in overgrown pasture and along fallen fences and by the sills and up through the
Maine island where raspberries burgeoned from the ruins of rude shacks which once were
fishing camps. Raspberries in old ruins.

Learn ethics from the shad.

The shad running, heavy with roe, successions,
and the soon, lilac culmination, the run of
the lilac shad.

Of Shad and men, I sing,
and all the particles of life
and of Hamilton who also
saw himself a particle of the successions
and, unspeaking, cried
Damn you, I am infinite.

Yea, the infinity of man and the power
of life beyond man
the wonder of water
carbon and its compounds
of sun and genes, of DNA
determining and the
indeterminate particles,
of that which always is
I sing, at the end and beginning of mysteries.

The indeterminate particle determined
name: Speck
did murder in the techno
name
archetype
mass murder mass man known as Speck.

The werewish is upon us
a sickness in life Hamilton life itself was sick

Martin Eden

into the ocean

Once upon Hudson's shores, the namegiver
sucked-in a wind of flowers off the Jersey meadows.
He paused, that blunt captain, unmoving,
unknowing of his calm smile. The pleasure
of that land smell! Pollen, resin, leafy earth.
So sweet one Dutchman did not know What
had greeted them. A mariner, wading,
with cutlass did in a seven-foot sturgeon
for a common feast. the richest of rivers!
Such sturgeon and the shad and striped bass surged
in the fertile meeting place, the river's
slow sea-mingling, mackerel, silver hake and bluefish,
menhaden for fertilizer, cod and herring
and anchovies upstream at the strong freshening
joined carp and sunfish and yellow perch in a long wide bay.
More, an estuary full of oysters,

blue crabs teeming in the shallows. Finding at that landfall, fame of mink and otter, muskrat and beaver in hardwood highwolds with many wolves and deer, easy heath hens and huge wary cats, and such gabble of turkeys hunters shot only for twenty-pound-plump, O Providence, all said For Ever.

Hamilton, in his city, dreamed
the land's last fragrance.
Running a gauntlet of gorp, shad still swam
in hordes upriver into the future.
A man willed them into the future.
He commanded the elements.

Of the numbers of shad and men,
Of law and banking and the suns,
I sing wild raspberries and world trade.

Jules Supervielle

THE CALL

The ladies in black took up their violin
As though to play, backs to the mirror turned.

The wind as in better days died down
The better to hear mysterious threnodies.

But 'most at once seized with a great forget
The violin fell silent in the women's arms

Like a naked child who has fallen asleep
Among the trees.

It seemed that nothing more could ever wake
The immobile bridge, the marble violin.

And then it was that from the depths of sleep
A voice breathed: 'Only you could make it play,
Come quickly, come.'

Translated from the French by David Gascoyne

George Szirtes

THE GIRLS

A mosquito tipsy with blood, the children dozing.
 Prams are curdling on the patio.
 Here a high buzz of female conversation
 Over cups of coffee, intelligent, worn young faces.
 The house has a lot to answer for
 But no one asks it to account for itself,
 Instead they address themselves to the well of experience—
 A long long throat before you hit the water,
 The penny will be falling for years.

The room is charged with danger. At the bottom
 Of the well there lives a toad
 Clammy and neglected who forces them to speak.
 Words bubble up, the toad is wounded.
 They are thick with children.
 Look what we have fished out of the water!
 Each nurses a genius at her breast
 Who sucks her dry. It is beautiful,
 Sophisticated, dangerous, dull, charming.



Shakuntala Tambimuttu

IMAGES OF DADDY IN NEW YORK, 1977

1

Gray and broken, lost in a world of his own
 he sits, not alone, talking like a mad man.
 Once bright eyes now turned melancholy yellow
 shift slowly to gaze at nothing.
 Finally the glazed globes focus upon
 the carelessly strewn about beer cans which
 compete for attention among the various pieces of art,
 and the artists who created them.
 He pauses, as everyone waits expectantly
 for his words of wisdom.
 Slowly, and with expression, he finally speaks
 'Damn! We're out of bloody beer.'

2

The morning sun rises sending waves of light
across a dry sea to finally strike the window in brilliant
splashing crests, illuminating the room within.
The followers have left it in a flurry of pills
and alcohol leaving the spoils behind them.
Daddy lies sprawled as if dead upon the mountains of sheets
and pillows gasping as a goldfish on the floor.
Stale music is yet blaring,
But his ears are deaf to its angry call.
Sleep will be the order of the day
But tonight there will be another gathering . . .

John Wain

HORSES

heavy fringed feet
slipping and stamping on the short steep hills

iron-rimmed wheels
grinding on cobbles, creak and chink of harness

as the sweat-suppled
collar leans to the strain of a ton's drag:

a ton of hay, a ton
of coke, a ton of flint, a ton of money

to fly on crisp
green-rustling Bank of England wings or bunch

into a fat gold
cloud and thunder sovereigns down to wherever

money mucks in
to flower as country homes with gravel drives

and the young master's
household-name school with ivy and long elms:

away, beyond
that hazed horizon with slag-tips and farms.

The horses pull
nostril-dilated, snorting, and the men
with calloused hands
walk with them, say their names, bring round their heads
their patient heads
that understand the weight of earth and sky.

Why horses? because the wheels
could never afford to stop
turning, so the hoofs
must clop-clop ahead of the
wheels, the big fringed feet
ahead of the iron-rimmed
wheels with their heavy spokes
of timber, and the men
with ungloved hands could
never afford to stop
walking beside the big patient
heads: turning them, turning them.

O they could never afford
to stop: Master in his house
with the gravel drive, Young
Master under his elms, the shareholders,
the work-force, the Empire,
yea, all which it inherit, would go
splat and vanish if they ever
stopped, splat like a mud bubble
into surrounding blackness.
Or so they all believed. Believed, and worked.

Come with me: it's easy: dangle
in a snug basket or ride my
back, boy-on-a-dolphin style, but either
way, come, and share my aerial
surveillance of my pre-beginnings,
the Ur-history of an individual
stubborn and free-wheeling, yet always
suspecting that he moves in
cut grooves, traces a diagram
marked out in sepia-tinted
years: and marked as much
by weather and animals as by ancestors.

My Ur-history is the sweat and heartbeat
of horses, as much as anything: not
lean-bellied racers, glossy hunters or
the dappled spit-and-polish mounts of
impassive guardsmen or the wary
police, no, work-horses, bred
for muscle-power and long obedience.

Now we tilt north and west: the air smells fresher:
Our shadow falls across the fields of Cheshire.

Unsheltered, featureless, no painter's vistas:
a place for diggers-in and dour resisters.

Flat, wooded country. No hills. Some ridges.
Dull-gleaming canals and little humped bridges.

Dark red-brick farms and barns. Clatter of pails.
Chester a distant smudge: and further, Wales

where the flat country ends and language changes:
gnarled oaks, black cattle, little stubborn ranges

of those primeval mountains, old when Earth
was new. They have their truth, they know their worth.

Theirs not to toil and spin, not to produce.
Here on the plain, the earth is made for use:

the plough, the wagon, milk and sheaves of grain.
I grew out of these fields. They call me Wain.

So there they are: rooted. Stayers
in one place. No layers

of perception and response, just the one
flat bench for their spirit to work on.

Or so you'd think, seeing them. But
the mind burrows madly in its deep rut:

these people have dreams, and longings, yes,
even these people. Try to guess

what glowing images could ever fuel
dreams in these limbs and brains. The cruel

load of day-labour pins them down
in the wind-badgered fields or rectangular town:

if they wander a few paces from the track
of wage-work, a voice warns 'Get back,
get back for the milking, the kiln-firing,
lay down meekly your dreaming and desiring,
drop your longings like discarded tools,
let them rust by the discoloured pools
left by the cold rain in the cart-ruts.
green jungle parrots and sweet coconuts
are not more alien to your narrow patch
than dream-eggs of pleasure which never hatch.'

And what of the needs that burn, early and late?
O palliate, says the oracle, palliate,
find a girl within a few streets,
rock her fiercely between lawful sheets:
then children: she's older, and tired
and Love is a master who once hired
both of you on a lifetime contract.
Forget that first glad shock of contact
and learn to see life as a cart-wheel
with an iron rim. Not paid to feel
and certainly not encouraged to dream,
your basic metaphor is the work-team:
the plodding alliance of man and horse
or man and wife, with some love of course
or at least some habit and good-nature
to soften Existence his grim feature:
and yet they dream, I promise you that they do,
huge coloured shapes come slowly moving through
the white landscape of each sleeping mind
like ornate balloons that drift and never find
anchorage that could be shown on a chart,
yet carrying food for the starved heart
which they let fall haphazard over the roofs
and chimneys. Nor are any reproofs
provoked or anxieties stirred:
a balloon is not menacing like a giant bird,
it floats gently above landscape and steeple:
it does not tyrannize the sleeping people

where they lie gently curled, body to body:
it practises only its gently psalmody,
feeding their sleep with the things they hunger after,
some sense of joy and movement, surprise and laughter.
And the long foreheads of the horses, do they shelter
dreams of rest in a green delta
where grass is rich and sweet, and from deep shade
birds call? I think they should not be afraid
to dream, who have so clearly nothing to lose.
But the men, afraid or not, cannot choose
but dream and under each broad demented moon
gather the dream-packets dropped from the balloon.
Why am I so sure
they dreamt, although their prison was secure?
Why do I see so clearly
their visions were not idle fancies merely?
Because they live in me.
Behind my eyes what they saw, I still see.
Dream words are spoken
also to me, who by that signal woken
In the cool dawn, cry
as they cried then, *Let me live first, then die,*
not die within
and only then my usefulness begin:
so I am able
to share their dreams in that long cobbled stable.
Able? I have no choice.
They had their patient skills. I have my voice.



Andrew Waterman

THE END OF THE AFFAIR

It is like a play ending,
and lights go on and all will be packed away,
and nothing now but to go out
into a winter-seeming summer's night.

So standing wishing at least this were
more like some old small-town street, curly lamps
amber, deep-toned brickwork, leaded windows,
scaled humanly, not this, not this

exposure under sodium-flare
and blind glass walls, one partly dwells
(and such a haunting flavour still as when
aroma in an emptied wine-glass lingers)

back where ongoing all,
costumery, avowals, sweet-sour deed,
so focused on, seemed meant; and checking truly
shows emotion has been spent.

But it was just a play:
void aftermath this sadness of dispersal,
the props disposed of, some for future use;
she disposed for her next part.

Evan Gwyn Williams

THE WHITE BALLOON

Poverty stood at the door in a suit of gold.
And dreaming she thought
through the mustiness of decay
the way
to paradise was through his gold-bright eye.

Behind,
the room exuded a green odour
where four damp children stood curious as cats.
And the woman said
'It's the glint of your coat
and the sun in your hair

and the way that you stare
and the flashy white boat
you've down in the bay
which clearly attracts me today.'

So, he turned in the light, half-beckoning,
with a smile on his face,
and her heart beat quick as he played his ace
'You as a woman must listen close
for all things are possible
You may marry a prince or a millionaire,
become what you wish
like the famous girl by the grate'. . .

And the woman replied—

'O, you know that I'm caught
in the everlasting trap they wrought,
for once I was pretty and fair
with hope glowing in my heart like the light of a flare

and I saw clearly to the horizon'. . .

And the children stood behind in silence and awe.

*And the dancing girls rose through the green
with their golden tresses afloat in the dream.*

But the woman turned from the door
and into the dark.

'Please wait,' said the man in the golden coat.

But the woman replied—
'Tomorrow you'll come like a very bad cold,
and every day until I am old'. . .

And he turned like a coin
and he walked away
to his flashy white boat right down in the bay
and he turned and he walked away past a child
who stood as silent as stone
and who held in her hand
the string of a white balloon.

J. W. Wragg

BLIND JACK

egad this spalpeen was a good one
bright of eye and steel-capped tooth
my buddy-pal were he and shall be
sons of one soil were we forsooth

in troth I pledge thee he's a laddo
well I loved his wooden leg
picked he up full pirate stations
on the rims of his steel specs

well we gunged and eek well quaffed we
nut-brown ale in crystal cup
full well did we the long lanes compass
none were they to carve us up

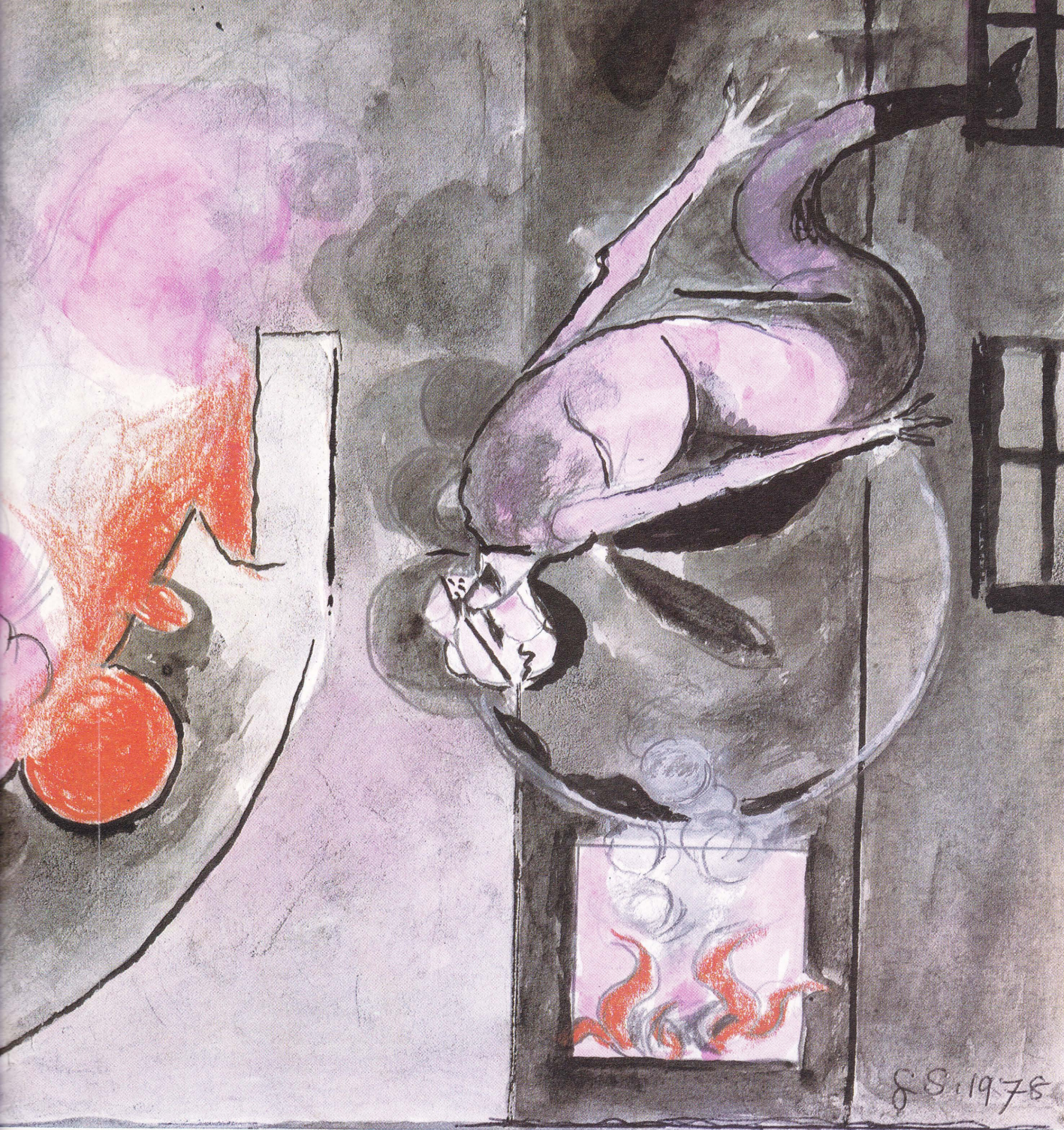
thurgh the town by gas-lit byway
we the lawful ways forsook
full many a maid did we deflower
by the light of his steel hook

gadzooks I rue him fearless pigmy
who now to roam the streets beside?
he was a buddy, if a pimple,
limping alway at my side

yonks be gone since he be parted
namoore his coal-black face I see
for ought I woot the pox be on him
again his like shall never be.



One evening like the years that shut us in,
 Roofed by dark-blooded & convulsive cloud,
 Led onward by the scarlet & black flag
 Of anger & dispondency myself:
 My searcher & distracter; wandering
 Through unnamed streets of a great nameless town,
 As in a syncope, sudden, absolute,



Was shown the Void which undermines the world;
 For all that eye can claim is impotent —
 Sky, solid beds of buildings, masks of flesh —
 Against the splintering of that screen which shields
 Man's puny consciousness from hell: over the edge
 Of a thin inch's fraction lie in wait for ~~him~~ him
 Bottomless depths of warring emptiness.



Bob Dylan

(Three lyrics from *Slow Train Coming*, issued 20th August, hitherto unpublished elsewhere, courtesy of Bob Dylan, and Jeff Rosen along with Diane Lapson of Special Rider Music.)

GONNA CHANGE MY WAY OF THINKING

Gonna change my way of thinking,
Make myself a different set of rules
Gonna change my way of thinking,
Make myself a different set of rules
Gonna put my good foot forward,
(And) stop being influenced by fools

So much oppression,
Can't keep track of it no more
So much oppression,
Can't keep track of it no more
Sons becoming husbands to their mothers,
(And) old men turning young daughters into whores

Stripes on your shoulders,
Stripes on your back and on your hands
Stripes on your shoulders,
Stripes on your back and on your hands
Swords piercing your side,
Blood and water flowing through the land

(Well) don't know which (one) is worse,
Doing your own thing or (just) being cool
(Well) don't know which (one) is worse,
Doing your own thing or (just) being cool
You remember only about the brass ring,
You forget all about the golden rule

You can mislead a man,
You can take a hold of his heart with your eyes
You can mislead a man,
You can take a hold of his heart with your eyes
But there's only one authority,
(And) that's the authority on high

I got a God-fearing woman,
One I can easily afford
I got a God-fearing woman,
One I can easily afford
She can do the Georgia crawl,
She can walk in the spirit of the Lord

Jesus said, 'Be ready,
For you know not the hour in which I come'
Jesus said, 'Be ready,
For you know not the hour in which I come'
He said, 'He who is not for me is against me',
Just so you know where He's coming from

There's a kingdom called Heaven,
A place where there is no pain of birth
There's a kingdom called Heaven,
A place where there is no pain of birth
Well the Lord created it, mister,
About the same time He made the earth

GOTTA SERVE SOMEBODY

You may be an ambassador to England or France
You may like to gamble, you might like to dance
You may be the heavyweight champion of the world
You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls

Chorus:

*But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
You're gonna have to serve somebody
Well it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody*

You might be a rock 'n' roll addict prancing on the stage
You might have drugs at your command, women in a cage
You may be a business man or some high degree thief
They may call you doctor or they may call you chief

Chorus

You may be a state trooper, you might be a young Turk
You may be the head of some big TV network
You may be rich or poor, you may be blind or lame
You may be living in another country under another name

Chorus

You may be a construction worker working on a home
 You may be living in a mansion or you might live in a dome
 You might own guns and you might even own tanks
 You might be somebody's landlord, you might even own banks

Chorus

You may be a preacher with your spiritual pride
 You may be a city councilman taking bribes on the side
 You may be workin' in a barbershop, you may know how to cut hair
 You may be somebody's mistress, may be somebody's heir

Chorus

Might like to wear cotton, might like to wear silk
 Might like to drink whiskey, might like to drink milk
 You might like to eat caviar, you might like to eat bread
 You may be sleeping on the floor, sleeping in a king-sized bed

Chorus

You may call me Terry, you may call me Timmy
 You may call me Bobby, you may call me Zimmy
 You may call me R.J., you may call me Ray
 You may call me anything but no matter what you say

Chorus

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
You're gonna have to serve somebody
Well it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody

SLOW TRAIN

Sometimes I feel so lowdown and disgusted
 Can't help but wonder what's happenin' to my companions
 Are they lost or are they found
 Have they counted the cost it'll take to bring down
 All their earthly principles they're gonna have to abandon
 There's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend

I had a woman down in Alabama
 She was a backwoods girl, but she sure was realistic
 She said 'Boy, without a doubt, have to quit your mess
 And straighten out. You could die down here,
 Be just another accident statistic.'
 There's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend

All that foreign oil controlling American soil
Look around you, it's just bound to make you embarrassed
Sheiks walkin' around like kings
Wearing fancy jewels and nose rings
Deciding America's future from Amsterdam and to Paris
And there's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend

Man's ego is inflated, his laws are outdated
They don't apply no more
You can't rely no more to be standin' around waitin'
In the home of the brave, Jefferson turnin' over in his grave
Fools glorifying themselves, trying to manipulate Satan
And there's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend

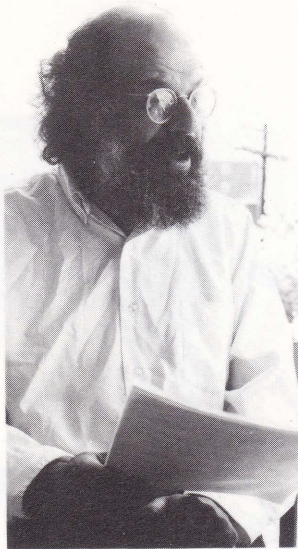
Big time negotiators, false healers and woman haters
Masters of the bluff and masters of the proposition
But the enemy I see wears a cloak of decency
All non-believers and men stealers
Talkin' in the name of religion
And there's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend

People starving and thirsting, grain elevators are bursting
Oh, you know it costs more to store the food than it do to give it
They say lose your inhibitions, follow your own ambitions
They talk about a life of brotherly love
Show me someone who knows how to live it
There's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend

Well, my baby went to Illinois with some bad talkin' boy
She could destroy—a real suicide case
But there was nothin' I could do to stop it
I don't care about economy, I don't care about astronomy
But it sure do bother me to see my loved ones turning into puppets
There's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend

Allen Ginsberg

OLD POND



The old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!
Hard road! I walked till both feet stunk—
Ma! Ma! Whatcha doing down on that bed?
Pa! Pa! what hole you hide your head?

Left home got work down town today
Sold coke, got busted looking gay
Day dream, I acted like a clunk
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!

Got hitched, I bought a frying-pan
Fried eggs, my wife eats like a man
Won't cook, her oatmeal tastes like funk
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!

Saw God at six o'clock tonight
Flop house, I think I'll start a fight
Headache like both my eyeballs shrunk,
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!



Hot dog! I love my mustard hot
Hey Rube! I think I just got shot
Drop dead She said you want some junk?
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!

Oh ho your dirty needle stinks
No no I don't shoot up with finks
Speed greed I stood there with the punk
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!

Yeh yeh gimme a breath of fresh air
Guess who I am well you don't care
No name call up the mocking Monk
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!

No echo, make a lot of noise
Come home you owe it to the boys
Can't hear you scream your fish's sunk
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!

Just folks, we bought a motor car
No gas I guess we crossed the bar
I swear we started for Podunk
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!

I got his banjo on my knee
I played it like an old Sweetie
I sang plunk-a plunk-a-plunk plunk plunk plunk
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!

One hand I gave myself the clap
Unborn, but still I took the rap
Big deal, I fell out of my bunk
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!

Hey hey! I ride down the blue sky
Sit down with worms until I die
Fare well! Hūm Hūm Hūm Hūm Hūm Hūm!
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!

Red barn rise wet in morning dew
Cockadoo dle do oink oink moo moo
Buzz buzz—flyswatter in the kitchen, thwunk!
Th' old pond—a frog jumps in, kerplunk!



22nd August, 1978.

WHAT'S DEAD

Clouds are dead
Movies dead shadows
ocean 40% dead said expert J. Cousteau
Shakespeare the magician, Rimbaud visionary dead
Alla Nazimova dead vamp silent
Walt Disney of Mickey Mouse, Buck Rogers in the Twenty-first Century, Hollywood deceased
Tragedean Sophocles passed away
General Napoleon obituaried in 1822
Queen Liliuokalani passed on to her reward
Chief Joseph buried in Washington State
MacArthur who wanted atombombs to blow up China
Eisenhower and Xerxes who led armies to the grave
The Skeleton Man in the Barnum and Baily Circus Freakshow bony in coffin
the Cat that played in the basement Paterson New Jersey when I was ten
Lindburgh baby kidnapped found dead in a swamp of laundry
Louis my father tombstoned with a riddle in rain over Newark

Jesus Christ for all his assumption, dust and bone in this world
 Buddha relieved of his body, empty vehicle parked noiseless
 Allah a silent word in a book, or cry on the lips of muezzin in tower
 Moses not even in the promised land, just dead—
 Tickertape for heroes, clods of dirt for forgotten grandpas.
 Television ghosts stalk living-room and bed-chamber
 Bing Crosby the crooner, Elvis Presley rock 'n' roll Star, Groucho Marx mustached joker,
 Einstein who invented the universe, Naomi Ginsberg Communist Muse, Isadora Duncan
 dancing in diaphanous scarves
 Jack Kerouac the Poet, Jimmy Dean the mystic actor, Boris Karloff the old Frankenstein,
 Celebrities and Nonentities, all set apart absent from their paths, shadows left behind—
 These were the musings of the Buddhist student Allen Ginsberg.

16th October, 1977.

FAKE SAINT

I am Fake Saint
 magazine Saint Ram Das
 Who's not a Fake Saint consciousness, Nobody!
 The 12th Trungpa, Karmapa 16, Dudjom lineage of Padmasambhava, Pope Jean-Paul,
 Queen of England crowned with dignity's brilliant empty Diamonds Sapphires Emeralds,
 Amber, Rubies—
 The sky is Fake Saint, emptyhearted blue
 The fields no saints either, tractors in the Sacramento Valley floor cornfields brown and
 green higher than the red T-shirted jogger.
 This Volkswagon Fake Saint, pulled out wires of the licence-plate light smoking shorted in
 the rear-engine door
 Once more, brown-filtered cigarette butt passed by hand still smoking to the ashtray
 No saints long-haired boys at the bus driver's wheel
 Hard workers no Fake Saints labourers everywhere Sentient Beings behind desks in
 Plutonium offices
 swatting flies under plastic flower-power signs
 Driving Ponderosa and Spruce roads to the poet's shrine at Kitkitdizze
 Snyder Ginsberg hermitages—Shobo-An Temple on a black-oak groved hillside—
 Discontinuous, the thought—empty—no harm
 To blame the thought would cling to the Bummer—
 Unborn Evil, the Self and its systems
 Transitory intermittent gapped in Grass Valley stopping for gas
 Plutonium blameless, much as hydrogen Lamb
 Insentient space filled with green bushes and clouds over Ranger Station signs
 Uncertain as incense.

7th September, 1978.

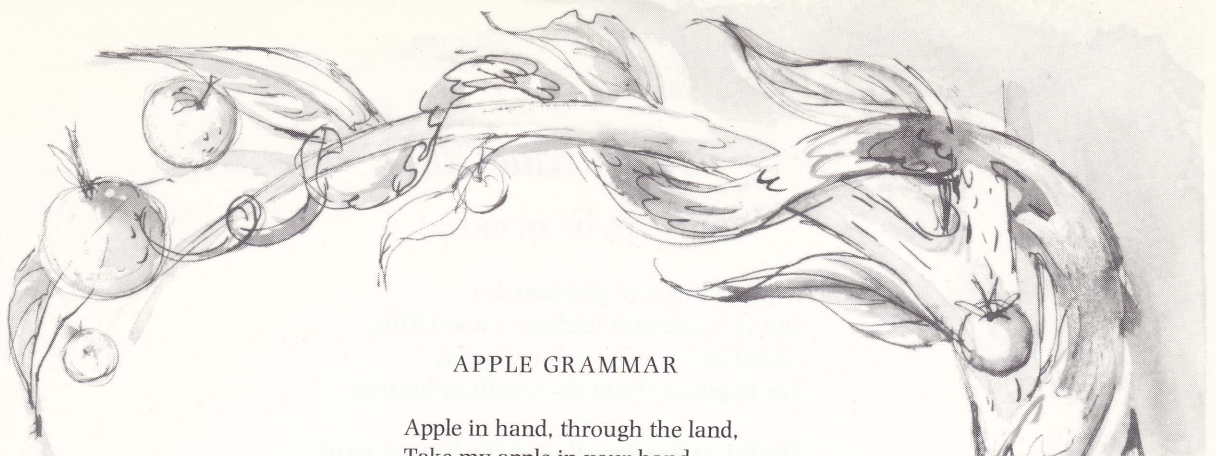
A PLEASANT AFTERNOON

One day 3 poets and 60 cars were sitting under a green-striped Chataqua tent in Aurora
listening to Black spirituals, tapping their feet, appreciating the words flying by in
mountain winds
on a pleasant sunny day of rest—The big wind blew,
blue heavens filled with fluffy clouds stretched from Central City to Rocky Flats, Plutonium
sizzled in its secret bed,
hot dogs sizzled in the Lion's Club lunchwagon microwave mouth, orangeade bubbled over
in waxen cups
Traffic moved along Colefax, meditators sat silent in the Buddhist shrine room at Boulder
following the breath going out of their noses,
Nobody could remember anything, the wind flew out of mouths and nostrils, out of heaven,
across Colorado plains, and the tent flapped happily open spacious and didn't fall down.

18th June, 1978.

MANHATTAN MAY DAY MIDNIGHT

Out on the lamped and asphalt street on May Day Midnight
I passed the dark'd Italian Still Saloon where Rumour'd Mafia Cadillacs lurked last year
around the Corner from my apartment on First Avenue, I'd walked out for the *Times*—
refrigerator repair-shop crowded narrow, bright fluorescent window'd
at this hour? To light up thieves? a new brilliance on Dark sidewalk—
Where a pile of dead newspapers swirled in the Chill Spring whirlwind
round garbage Cans and plastic bags of refuse leaned by the Curb—
Wind wind and old news sailed thru the air, old *Times* whirled above the Pavement
and scattered Part way up the street front of Asher Levy grammar school's green facade.
At the Corner of 11th under a dim Street-light in a hole in the ground
a man wrapped in work-Cloth and wool Cap pulled down his bullet skull
Stood and bent with a rod and a flashlight turning round in his hole halfway sunk in
earth
Peering down at his feet, up to his Chest in the asphalt by a granite Curb
and round corner where his workmate poked a flexible tube in a tiny hole, a youth in
gloves
Who answered my question 'Smell of Gas—Someone must've reported in'—
Yes the body stink of City bowels, rotting tubes six feet under
Could explode any minute sparked by Con Ed's breathing puttering truck
I noticed Parked, as I passed by hurriedly Thinking Ancient Rome, Ur
Were they like this, is it the same midnight workmen and passers by
inscribing records of decaying pipes and piles of Garbage on Marble and Cunieform,
ordinary night for a citizen to be out on the street looking for News
rumour, gossip, workmen and police in uniform, Passing silent sunk in thought
under the windows of sleepers coupled with Monster squids and Other-Planet eyeballs in
their sheets
in the same night six thousand years old where Cities rise and fall and turn to dream.

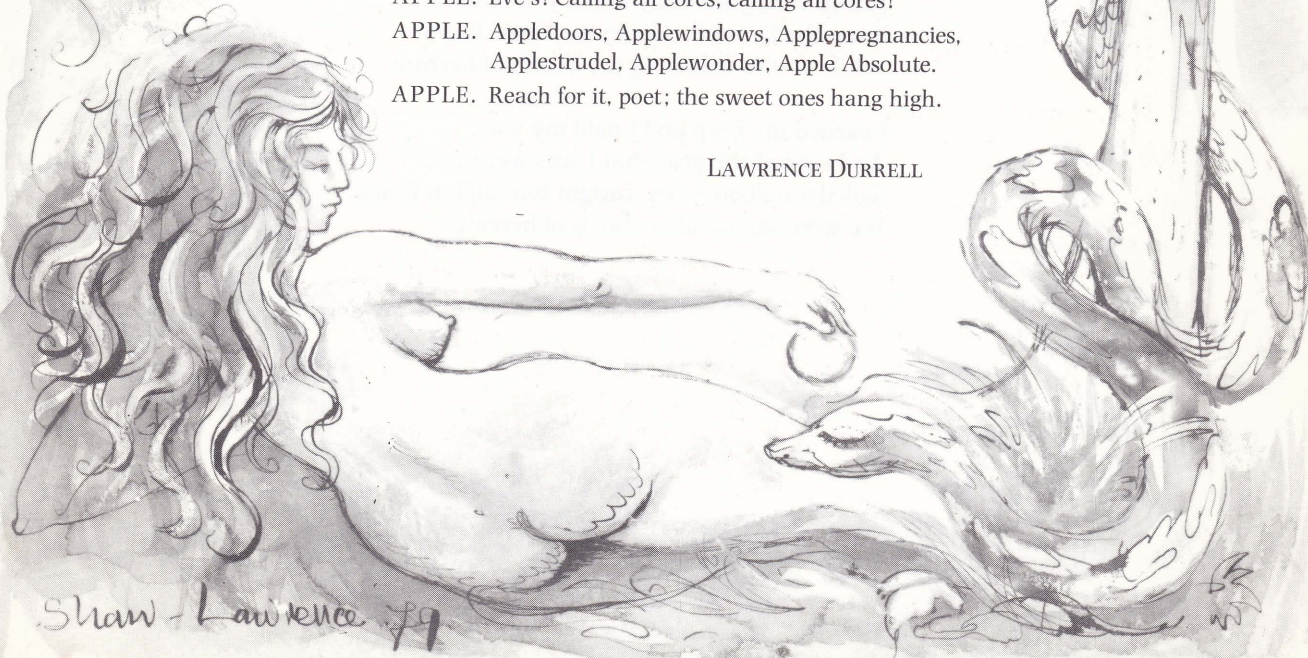


APPLE GRAMMAR

Apple in hand, through the land,
Take my apple in your hand
Hold my apple hold it fast
Give me the bite that's gonna last
Apples will not grow in sand.

- APPLE. In Sanscrit the breast or the behind
APPLE. Brings tranquility to snakes in the Freudian Eden.
APPLE. Of discord, of disorder. The classical Goddess's prize.
APPLE. Signal of supercelestial beauty.
APPLE. Pomme in French, often de terre,
But often neither here nor there.
The opposite of des fesses tristes.
APPLE. Turnover, turn over, WILL you please
TURN OVER!
APPLE. Pie in the sky of your sweet white
Halves O apple of my eyeball, appleeye.
APPLE. A day keeps the doctor away, or so they say.
APPLE. Play at bobapple, i.e. do something with all
Your might, with all your night.
APPLE. Eve's! Calling all cores, calling all cores!
APPLE. Appledoors, Applewindows, Applepregnancies,
Applestrudel, Applewonder, Apple Absolute.
APPLE. Reach for it, poet; the sweet ones hang high.

LAWRENCE DURRELL



Ewan MacColl

SHOALS OF HERRING

It was a fine and pleasant day,
Out of Yarmouth harbour I was faring,
As cabin boy on a sailing lugger,
For to go and hunt the shoals of herring.

We fished the Swarth and the Broken Bank,
I was cook and I'd a quarter-sharing,
And I used to sleep standing on my feet
And dream about the shoals of herring.

The work was hard and the hours were long,
And the treatment, sure it took some bearing,
There was little kindness and the kicks were many
As we hunted for the shoals of herring.

We left the home grounds in the month of June
And to canny Shields we soon was bearing,
With a hundred cran of the silver darlings
That we'd taken from the shoals of herring.

Now you're up on deck, you're a fisherman,
You can swear and show a manly bearing,
Take your turn on watch with the other fellas,
While you're searching for the shoals of herring.

In the stormy seas and the living gales,
Just to earn your daily bread you're daring,
From the Dover Straits to the Farøe Islands
While you're following the shoals of herring.

I earned my keep and I paid my way,
And earned the gear that I was wearing;
Sailed a million miles, caught ten million fishes,
We were sailing after shoals of herring.

SWEET THAMES FLOW SOFTLY

I met my girl at Woolwich Pier, beneath a big crane standing,
And, Oh, the love I felt for her it passed all understanding.

Took her sailing on the river,
flow, sweet river, flow,
London Town was mine to give her.
sweet Thames flow softly.
Made the Thames into a crown,
flow, sweet river, flow,
Made a brooch of Silvertown.
sweet Thames flow softly.

At London Yard I held her hand, at Blackwall Point I faced her,
At the Isle of Dogs I kissed her mouth and tenderly embraced her.

Heard the bells of Greenwich ringing,
flow, sweet river, flow,
All the time my heart was singing.
sweet Thames flow softly.
Limehouse Reach I gave her there,
flow, sweet river, flow,
As a ribbon for her hair.
sweet Thames flow softly.

From Shadwell Dock to Nine Elms Reach we cheek to cheek were dancing,
Her necklace, made of London Bridge, her beauty was enhancing.

Kissed her once again at Wapping,
flow, sweet river, flow,
After that there was no stopping.
sweet Thames flow softly.
Richmond Park it was her ring,
flow, sweet river, flow,
I'd have given her anything.
sweet Thames flow softly.

From Rotherhithe to Putney Bridge my love I was declaring,
And she, from Kew to Isleworth, her love to me was swearing.

Love had set my heart a-burning,
flow, sweet river, flow,
Never saw the tide was turning.
sweet Thames flow softly.
Gave her Hampton Court to twist
flow, sweet river, flow,
Into a bracelet for her wrist.
sweet Thames flow softly.

Now, alas, the tide has changed, my love she has gone from me,
And winter's frost has touched my heart and put a blight upon me.

Creeping fog is on the river,
flow, sweet river, flow,
Sun and moon and stars gone with her.
sweet Thames flow softly.
Swift the Thames runs to the sea,
flow, sweet river, flow,
Bearing ships and part of me.
sweet Thames flow softly.

Francis Scarfe

THE STREET-PAINTER

There are always men who have the
nerve to set up their easel in front
of Notre-Dame or Saint Paul's then
start painting something like it. If
you watch a man painting a landscape
or indeed anything, watch him closely
and you will see that he spends more
of his time and energy in looking at
his own picture and working on it,
than he spends in looking at what is
in front of him. He looks like a
sort of Narcissus interested only in
himself, and for whom the landscape
is just a pretext. Either he or
Notre-Dame might as well not be there.

So, when you are writing a poem, you
tend to spend more time on the poem
(as an object) than on the idea, so
that the idea is often lost or changed
or else you get hold of the idea and
spoil the poem. What you then throw
away is neither poem nor idea but a
bit of paper with handwriting on it.

Whatever you try to write or transform
translate transmute into art (the
words are all pedantic)—let's say
you are making a drawing of a cat or
a poem about one—you are making an
object which can never be a cat,
although you want it to have a cat in

it or some catlike quality. But a cat is a cat and a poem is a poem, and indeed everything is alien to poetry except language.

If you make a poem it is a linguistic object. If it is properly a poem then it is a meaningful object. No doubt a cat is a meaningful object, but not in the same way. Anyway it is always trying to run out of the poem or glares at you with its resentful yellow eyes and never looks twice the same. And of course a poem never looks twice the same either, and is always trying to run away from the cat.

If you draw a cat or write about one, in any case you have to do so in such a way that a man who has never seen a cat will get a fair idea of what it is like. This is such impossible work that most poems fail to be poems to the extent that they ought to be, for instead of cohabiting peacefully the idea and the poem kill each other. This is why Colingwood said that the real poem is an event in the mind, and that when you write it it is no longer the same as you intended it to be. Henry James said that events in the mind are real events. A cat is not an event in the mind although it might cause one.

I have had quite enough of this and wish I had never seen the man with his easel or begun thinking about cats. In any case I prefer dogs. But you have to make a good linguistic object and seize the essence as well. Don't let the cat walk out of your poem. Make it PURR.

FALSE TEETH

I have discovered that all I have to do
Is to write down what is going on
From one moment to the next,
Not wishing any more to be happy
Or somebody, or to do something worth while,
But to live in the poem as it is,
Neither Jim Prose nor Jack Style,
Just to enjoy my loony happiness,
Putting the words down without choosing them
Any more than when you have a steak
And chips, you need to ask which chip is the best.
Thank god for potatoes, thank god
For chips, onions, leeks, garlic, bread:
You don't have to make any of them better.
You can't dress up an onion
So why should poems have false teeth?

BEING A MAN

After a day of poetry I came back
And was not told off,
But heard a silence worse than death.

Love is either not enough or it is too much.
All I want is to breathe like a tree
All I want is to be a man.

All you want is to be a woman.
I do not know what it is to be a woman.
Perhaps it is someone who lets you be a man.

PRAYER

You flop down on your knees and the prayer
Does not come, you are conscious only
Of your wizened hands on your old face,
And the hard knees like calloused hearts,
And your behind sticking out like an ape's.
There is nothing elegant in prayer.
The answer is, pray silently
As you drink your beer and smoke a cigarette,
But never kneel again.

THIS BOOK

I shall give you this book, my love—
 Unless I forget—
 Because it is not only about you
 But is my testament
 Which came between us like a fire
 Because I had to be alone in the wind,
 Because I had no other choice
 Than to pour out my spleen,
 All the gall of love and life and death,
 The arsenic of loneliness
 The fever to use words—
 Just as I took my cheque to the bank
 And drew the whole month's pay in cash
 Then wondered what to do with it.
 I had never had so much money before,
 All at once a pocket stuffed with notes,
 And I wanted to throw them away.
 Then suddenly I felt rich,
 Not with bad money but a few poems:
 Take them: you cannot spend a poem.

DUKE ELLINGTON

Duke Ellington gave us youngsters all he'd got,
Mood Indigo and *Paducah* were my hymns.
 Whatever that man did came proud and hot
 Who had two geniuses in him:
 He could have squeezed the music out of Hell—
 And so he did—he played back History.

The North and South had long since cracked the gong,
 So that his music had that tragic split
 Half-way between the elegy and the song,
 While through each black and broken chord there ran
 The grave nostalgia of the American.

Hamish Henderson

GLASCLUNE AND DRUMLOCHY

Note

[This poem is a product of the folk revival—it grew and developed as spoken (and sung) poetry at Edinburgh Festival readings in the mid 60s. These took place mainly at the original Traverse Theatre building in the Lawnmarket, and in the Crown Bar (now demolished) in Lothian Street, where the E.U. Folksong Society held its reunions.

Right from the earliest period of the 'People's Festivals' in Edinburgh (1951, 1952, 1953) poetry readings were an integral part of the growing 'folk scene'. The first of these were organized by the late Alan Riddell, founder of *Lines Review*. Excerpts from Hugh MacDiarmid's 'A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle' were given at the 1951 People's Festival ceilidh, between the rantipoling ballad singing of John Strachan and the vivacious piping sprees of John Burgess. Young poets were encouraged to contribute to these sessions. Much of the work of Alan Jackson and Tom Leonard has its ultimate origin in this particular creative blend of oral poetry and traditional Scottish song. Matt McGinn's work was also to a considerable extent inspired by it.

(Alan Jackson's version of 'The Minister to his Flock', an ancient orally transmitted joke which can be found in Richard M. Dorson's *Folk-Tales Told around the World*, page 43, was given by him at one of the Traverse ceilidhs in 1965. This pithy anecdote, which epitomizes the barbaric black humour of Calvinist Scotland, was energetically applauded by a predominantly English youthful audience which assumed that it was by Alan himself—and indeed it fell naturally into place between such poems as 'Knox' and 'Lord Save us, it's The Minister'. It appears—attributed to anon—in Alan's collection *Well, Ye Ken Noo*, produced in Bristol with the aid of the CND duplicator in 1963.)

'Glasclune and Drumlochy' is based on an historical tale which I heard in Glenshee, Perthshire, when I was a child. The subject matter is clearly blood-brother to many tales of Appalachian feuds. As children we naturally believed the story to be true, and indeed it may well be founded on fact.

The ruins of the castle of Glasclune are about three miles north-west of Blairgowrie, home of the 'Stewarts of Blair'. Glasclune is described in the *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1884) as 'an ancient baronial fortalice on the border of Kinloch parish, Perthshire, crowning the steep bank of a ravine at the boundary with Blairgowrie parish. The stronghold of the powerful family of Blair, it was once a place of considerable strength, both natural and artificial, and is now represented by somewhat imposing ruins.' The ruins were decidedly less imposing when we played around them—and in them—as children in the 1920s, and since then decay has proceeded apace. Indeed, Glasclune has gradually become for me a symbol like the mill which Hugh MacDiarmid apostrophizes in 'Depth and the Chthonian Image' (a long poem which is subtitled 'On looking at a ruined mill and thinking of the greatest'):

The mills o' God grind sma', but they
In you maun crumble imperceptibly tae

However, Glasclune is still there; the keep of Drumlochy, which bore the brunt of cannon fire, has disappeared off the face of the earth. (The Mains of Drumlochy is a farm.)

Glasclune appears once—and dramatically—in medieval Scottish history. It was the scene of a battle in 1392, when one of the sons of Alexander Stewart—son of Robert II, and well-known to history as 'The Wolf of Badenoch'—made an incursion into Stormont and the Braes of Angus. This foray was a kind of curtain-raiser to the more famous Highland invasion of 1411, when Donald of the Isles, leading a large army of 'Katherans', was fought to a standstill at Harlaw. In Wynton's *Original Cronykil of Scotland* (Book IX, Chapter XIV) there is a graphic account in verse of the battle of Glasclune, including an episode in which a knight from Dundee called Sir Davy de Lyndesay speared a Highlander, and was himself wounded by the dying cateran who writhed up the spear-shaft and cut Lyndesay's boot and stirrup leather to the bone.

Sua, on his hors he sittand than,
Throw the body he strayk a man
Wytht his spere down to the erde:
That man hald fast his awyn swerd
In tyl his neve, and wp thrawand
He pressit hym, nocht agayn standand
That he wes pressit to the erd,
And wyth a swake thare off his swerd
The sterap lethire and the bute
Thre ply or foure, abone the fute
He straik the Lyndesay to the bane,
That man na straike gave bot that ane,
For thare he deit: yeit nevirtheles

That gud Lord thare wondit wes,
 And had deit thare that day,
 Had nocht his men had hym away
 Agane his wil out of that pres.

Wynton locates the battle at 'Gasklune', but this is certainly the Glasclune of my childhood, for it is referred to as being in the Stermond (Stormont); furthermore Bower, in the *Scotichronicon*, locates the conflict in 'glenbrereth', probably glen Brerachan, which is in the same general area. Bower informs us that Walter Ogilvy, Sheriff of Angus, was slain 'per Cateranos quorum caput fuit Duncanus Stewart filius domini Alexandri comitis de Buchan' (by caterans whose leader was Duncan Stewart, son of the lord Alexander, Earl of Buchan).

(It is interesting to note that it was a brother of this same Duncan, leader of the 'caterans', who as Earl of Mar led the Aberdeenshire army *against* Donald of the Isles at Harlaw. So much for the over-simplified view of these conflicts as being simply and solely between 'Highlands' and 'Lowlands'.)

My poem is, as it were, an echo of this old warfare, as it still remotely pulsates in the folk memory. The 'clannish confine' lies in jagged outline across Scottish history. I was thinking also, of course, of the millennial internecine conflict of humankind, which in our century bids fair to write finis to the 'haill clamjamfrie'.—The sung part of the poem is the ballad pastiche, and is in italics. The tune is a variant of 'Cam ye by Atholl'.]

From the summit of Cnoc-mahar
 I look on the laigh . . .
 On fat Strathmore, and its braw
 largesse of lochs;
 Black Loch and White Loch, Fengus, Marlee, Clunie
 where the bolstered curlers come . . .

But back I turn
 northward, and stand at nightfall under Glasclune,
 by the canyon cleft of the shaggy shabby Lornty
 (the shaggy shabby, the dowdy, duddy Lornty)
 that marked the clannish confine.

There were two castles,
 two battled keeps, Drumlochy and Glasclune,
 that kept a bloodfeud bienly on the boil.
 They sat on their airse and they girmed fell gyte at ither
 ('I'll paisley your fitt', 'I'll brackley your invereye')
 . . . and atween, the scrogs of the dowdy duddy Lornty.
 Drumlochy's laird was a slew-eye dye-blue bloodhound
 who fought, as his sires had fought, with steel (cold steel!)
 and said the other mugger couldn't take it.
 But Glasclune knew six of that; he was progressive,
 and to be in tune with the times was all his rage.
 Now, one day he went out and bought a cannon
 (a square old toy unknown to the lad next door);
 with this he gave Drumlochy a thorough pasting—
 dang doon his wall, gave his stately pile the shakes:
 in fact, blockbust him quite.

"The moral of this," said Glasclune, with 'ill-concealed'
 hidalgo satisfaction, "is that Right
 —unready starter in the donnybrook stakes—
 must still rise early to possess the field."

*Now wae's me Glasclune
Glasclune and Drumlochy
They bashed ither blue
By the back side o' Knockie*

*Drumlochy focht fair,
But Glasclune the deceiver
Made free wi' a firewark
Tae blaw up his neebor.*

*Then shame, black shame, ay, shame on the bluidy Blairs;
Shame on the Blairs, an' sic wuddifu races.
They think nae sin
when they put the boot in
In the eyes of all ceevilized folk tae disgrace us.*

*Ochone Drumlochy
Glasclune and Drumlochy —
Twa herts on ae shiv*

An' a shitten larach.

Cnoc-mahar (Knockie): a hill above Blairgowrie
laigh: the low country
braw: fine
duddy: wretched, down at heel
bienly: comfortably
girmed: cursed, snarled
fell gyte: fiercely, wildly
paisley . . . fitt: references to the Rev. Ian Paisley and Gerry Fitt, antagonists in Northern Ireland
brackley . . . invereye: references to the classic ballad 'The Baron of Brackley' (Child 203)
scrogs: stunted bushes
dang doon: demolished
ither: (each) other
wae's me: alas
focht: fought
wuddifu: scoundrelly
shitten larach: dirty ruin



John Cooper-Clarke

VALLEY OF THE LOST WOMEN

The windows are Frigidaire icebergs, frozen in prickly heat
The vanishing cream victims drip-fed amnesia neat
Where the test card melodies warm you in powder blue pseudo bellair
Germs and flies alarm you they whisper the word 'expellair'
The eyes of the night sub-zero peep through the windows of sleep
Everyone's husband is a hero and ghost insurance men creep
Through the Valley Of The Long Lost Women
Dreaming under the driers, eating, sleeping and slimming
According to what is required
They walk through three-colour brochures depicting palms on aqua marine
In the half-built hotels out of focus they're mending the vending machine
Where sixty Italian love songs are sung to a million guitars
They lick their drinks-on-sticks among the men with important cigars
Numb to the digital numbers
Numb two three . . . four five six
Lost in a far away rhumba
Where the oil-drums are beaten with sticks
She left her heart in Frisco
She left her room in a mess
She left her hat at the disco
She never left her address
The diving-board springs to assistance
Throws you off from the shore
Telephone rings in the distance
There are lifts getting stuck between floors
A truck turns into a cul-de-sac
Springtime turns to ice
Ruck-sacks turn into hunch backs
Muscle men turn into mice
In a painless panorama
With its perpendicular might
The women are going bananas
And disappearing from sight
What do the girls say . . . bong!

Leonard Cohen

(Three lyrics from his new album to be issued in October 1979)

THE WINDOW

Why do you stand by the window
Abandoned to beauty and pride
The thorn of the night in your bosom
The spear of the age in your side

Lost in the rages of fragrance
Lost in the rags of remorse
Lost in the waves of a sickness
That loosens the high silver nerves

Chorus:

*O chosen love, O frozen love
O tangle of matter and ghosts
O darling of angels, demons and saints
And the whole broken-hearted hosts
Gentle this soul*

Come forth from the cloud of unknowing
And kiss the cheek of the moon
The new Jerusalem glowing
Why carry all night in the ruin

And leave no word of discomfort
And leave no observer to mourn
But climb on your tiers and be silent
Like the rose on its ladder of thorn

Then lay your rose on the fire
The fire gave up to the sun
The sun gave over to splendor
In the arms of the High Holy One

For the Holy One dreams of a letter
Dreams of a letter's death
Oh bless the continuous stutter
Of the word being made into flesh

THE TRAITOR

Now the swan it floated on the English River
The Rose of High Romance it opened wide
A suntanned woman yawned at me through the summer
The Judges watched us from the other side

I told my Mother, Mother I must leave you
Preserve my room, but do not shed a tear
Should rumors of a shabby ending reach you,
It was half my fault, and half the atmosphere

The Rose I sickened with a scarlet fever
The Swan I tempted with a sense of shame
She said at last I was her finest lover
And if she withered, I would be to blame

The Judges said, you missed it by a fraction
Rise up and brace your troops for the attack
The Dreamers ride against the Men of Action
Oh see the Men of Action falling back

But I lingered on her thighs a fatal moment
I kissed her lips as though I thirsted still
My falsity it stung me like a hornet
The poison sank and it paralyzed my will

I could not move to warn the younger soldiers
That they had been deserted from above
So on battlefields from here to Barcelona
I'm listed with the enemies of love

And long ago she said, I must be leaving
But keep my body here to lie upon
You can move it up and down and when I'm sleeping
Run some wire through that Rose and wind the swan

So daily I renew my idle duty
I touch her here and there, I know my place
I kiss her open mouth and I praise her beauty
And people call me traitor to my face

HUMBLED IN LOVE

Do you remember the pledges
That we pledged in the passionate night
They're soiled now and torn at the edges
Like moths on a stale yellow light

Nor penance serves to renew them,
Nor massive transfusions of trust
Not even revenge can undo them
So twisted these vows and so crushed

Chorus:

*And you say you've been humbled in love,
Cut down in your love
Forced to kneel in the mud
Next to me*

*Ah but why so bitterly
Turn from the one
Who kneels there
As deeply as thee*

Children have taken these pledges
They have ferried them out of the past
Oh beyond all the graves and the hedges
Where love must go hiding at last

And here where there is no description
Here in the moment at hand
No sinner need rise up forgiven
No victim need limp to the stand

Chorus

And look, dear heart, at the virgin
How she welcomes him into her gown
And mark how the stranger's cold armor
Dissolves like a star falling down

Why trade this vision for desire
When you may have them both
You will never see a man this naked
I will never hold a woman this close

Nicholas Moore

MATCHES

My box of matches, made in Finland, bears
 A coloured picture on it, CRANBROOK MILL.
 Others I've had, and kept to look at still,
 Of Cornish mines, oast houses, CHILHAM VILLAGE;
 Each time one strikes a vivid scene appears,
 These match-box plates evoking time and age,
 The white mill-hands a star or cross to prove
 That, when the wind blows, we remember; love;

O yes, love, in the meadows near Markinch
 Or the sands of Walberswick, of people, places,
 Of life itself. You give yourself a pinch
 And memory will furnish you the smell
 Of cricket bats rubbed down with linseed oil,
 Or rarer scents flare out, with matching faces.

A PRESENT TO A PANSY FROM A PLOT (To the old leech-gatherer)

I grow the finest pansies in my plot,
 Tigers from Holland, striped and marked, and pure
 Rogglis from Thunersee, from Italy
 Perfection of Naples—all of these I've got;
 Others besides, Pacific Giants I
 Suppose to be from Reinelt, and Majestics
 (Sakata in Japan) and many more;
 Whole worlds in flower, performing all their tricks.

Authentic, real, each petal in its place.
 But these were made by men. Each pansy's face—
 Smiling, perhaps, to think some nature boy
 Imagines otherwise—that I enjoy
 Was born of some devoted human mind
 Working for years to breed a finer kind.

Bernard Gutteridge

THOMAS'S POEM

That bit inside your nails
We call the quick;
Turn them towards you—
Growing—and say Hail!

Then turn them
Sideways, knuckles to
Knuckles. There's the
Waning and waxing moon.

Hands straight before you!
We have come full round;
Still the quick.
Now Christ's crown.

SWAN

There was a swan that
lived on a match box;
White on green with his
name *Swan* on the red
River bank. And inside the
matches rattled.

There was a fisherman who
fished a brown river;
Sat on the green bank and
watched his float,
Puffing his baccy and
rattling his matches.

Caught nothing all day,
smoked himself dry.
Five white swans came
floating goodnight to him
Quietly as the swan
living on his box,
All matches spent
inside his pocket:
No matches to rattle.

HEROES

Cole Porter

He climbed the top so long before
His legs toppled him.
But he could sing on stilts.

George Gershwin

How long did the tumour live inside
The music? Soft censor,
Burning the tunes we never knew.

Satchmo

Black Moses
Blew down that mountain air
A trumpet that
God gave him there.

Johnny Mercer

Music begged
Words from him; for he
Could black magic her
From melody into memory.

ICE CUBES

Have you ever noticed
How sinister ice cubes are? (They have a look
of the bathroom medicine cupboard with its
mirrored glance that avoids you as you open . . .)

Obedient at first out of the tap,
Running into their quarters.

Look at them after a bit: flocculent, swelling
from a fragile inside—out.

And then by God
First the tray clamps itself to your fingers
like a particularly nasty bit of painful sellotape

Then under the hot tap
When you think you have
tamed
them
they gadarene off all over the floor or down the
sleeve

Like all of us they just can't . . .

Colin Stubbington

SOLO

He chose trumpet—
Became trumpet himself,
Chaining mood to bronzed bracelets
Of sound, moaned through
The dry mouth of his horn.

The shuffling drums
Recognized his purpose;
Tutored the savage there;
Lent fire
To icy madrigals.

His carols dripped through the smoke:
Lachrimae Christi—
But I had no tears to spend,
Though he destroyed the geranium girls
Who danced as he played.

For, could I choose,
I too would lift brute sound
To sapphire smoothness
And rive my ice
Through the fabulous girls:

I too would take up iron
In my neutral fist
And drive—bluer than blue—
Blood knowledge through
Their shuttered thighs:

I too would choose trumpet
Peeling each note
Each geranium girl
In hard white wands or icy madrigals
Down to its separate quick.

John Pole

SEE IT COME DOWN

Dm G A7 Dm
 In the house where I was born, first home I knew, There's
 garden Dad made round the lawn where green grass grew, there's
 Dm G A7
 corrugated iron blinding all the windows; In the
 muck and rubble and mud, half bricks and
 A7 Dm
 cinders For the developers have come to town,
 G Dm A7 Dm
 And soon I'll see it, see it come down, see it come down.

In the house where I was born, first home I knew,
 There's corrugated iron blinding all the windows,
 In the garden dad made round the lawn where green grass grew
 There's muck and rubble and mud, half bricks and cinders
 For the developers have come to town
 And soon I'll see it, see it come down
 See it come down.

My old mum they've moved her to a high-rise flat,
 Where she misses her mates and hopes we'll see her Sunday.
 She lives alone with a lovely view and a clean door mat,
 Afraid that death will catch her napping someday.
 The lady with the meals-on-wheels, the one friend she's found
 Though she cries for the old place,
 She won't see it come down, see it come down.

Clouds of dust like smoke around a demolition site, where I drive my crane.
 It's swinging the big steel ball that smashes walls in.
 Winch it back careful 'til the cable's right and let it swing again,
 There's a little more no-man's land as each brick falls in.
 A car park and then an office block, when I've cleared the ground.
 They paid me to see to it,
 And now I've seen it come down, seen it come down.

We was all one like where we lived, wish we were now.
 We had debts and dole and kids but we did have neighbours.
 Where the street was they want to build some tombstone tower,
 Like a monster concrete money box for strangers.
 Every last square foot of it, worth a hundred pounds,
 Some day we'll see that come tumbling down, see it come down.

POINTS OF VIEW

CHANGING COLOURS OF THE MEMORY

GEORGE BARKER: *Villa Stellar* (Faber £2.50)

The keynote of George Barker's preceding and excellent collection, *Dialogues, etc.*, was celebration, a wresting of delight in the people and things of the world from death and sorrow. The child offered from the grave its wretched but triumphant ring-a-roses, fuschia bled regeneratively among the stones of a ruined house on a Cornish moor. The present volume, which is if anything better, has as its chief concerns the nature of the poem and the purpose of love, an odder combination than *vice versa*. The fifty-eight pieces vary in form from snippets of light verse and balladish extravaganzas to loosely rhymed couplets and a sonnet. The characteristic poem, however, consists of long, swirling verse-sentences in which the languid yet rigorous formulation of an argument or question is balanced by a splendidly rich lyrical resource. Barker's poetry is a headlong, torrential affair, its formal element irresistibly water:

... the impulse of
that recurring and continual suicide of love
like the small water that rides to the crest of the mountain
and casts itself over to create the poem and the fountain.

In the second poem in the book:

we both know that the poem, like Venus, is born from the spume
of the stream as it leaps and speaks among rocks and stones
or as the haemal cataract of the heart cascades
down doubts and mires and old circumstantial disasters
whispering and whistling what we hear as the poem.

The flood is capable of sweeping along with it some unlikely and bulky objects which in fact increase its momentum. Strange chunks of prose and paradoxical donnish propositions are rushed along by the pervasive pouring and tumbling lyricism. Sometimes the method fails: it's hard to work up much enthusiasm for a poem whose opening lines operate at so low a linguistic pressure as these:

There may of course be some point in the usage of language
as though it was written not by a man but a rather
sensitive machine. But are we to deduce from this that
the writer is not a person but an instrument constructed
like a typewriter capable of working by itself in a corner?

But in the main the mixture of elements, conversational, rhetorical, lyrical, which makes up the poems is marvellously effective—as much as anything else in suggesting the range of past voices, lives and contexts which are the book's raw material. Its aim, says Barker, is to record biographical instances and also the frame of mind in which the instances are being recollected. 'I have tried to describe the changing colours of the memory, as the dolphin might, if it could, try to describe the altering colours of its skin as it dies.' The 'frame of mind' of the rememberer and the instance remembered are brilliantly fused and confused. This is not the 'sermon-in-stone' poetry in which the past offers itself up numbly for the extraction of a moral, but a complex, shifting, many-layered account of past and present realities. There is a simpler vein, too, of beautifully evocative descriptive writing, as in this exchange:

And there in the May Borghese gardens with a foam of
blossoming flowers around us we sat at a small table

she with a hat like a huge waterlily and a glass of iced
 lemonade sweating in sunshine and the Roman sky like the
 interior of an enormous pearl, and semi-precious lizards scooting
 among the hibiscus. I said: 'It is pleasant here.'
 She answered: 'The sun is not Scottish. I feel faint.
 Yes, it is heavenly here. But I think of the misted November
 evenings and clouds coming up over the Cairngorms
 and the violent gusts of rain and the cold amber streams jumping
 amongst the lichened gullies and the rowan hissing in rain
 and a single horned sheep standing still as stone against the sky.'

Villa Stellar is the first of a projected four-part sequence. It has set an extraordinarily high standard for its successors to which one looks forward eagerly.

KIT WRIGHT

EXPANDING HORIZONS

DAVID GASCOYNE: *Journal 1937–1939*, with a Preface by Lawrence Durrell. London. The Enitharmon Press, 1978.

David Gascoyne's *Poems 1937–1942*, published by Editions Poetry London in 1943, proved him to be the most significant poet of his generation. In particular the *Miserere* series forms an opus which has not been excelled since. Now that we have access to the Paris Journal which Gascoyne kept between 1937–9 it is possible to see how heroically the young poet had struggled—against ill-health, mental disturbance, poverty, moral misery and deadlock—to achieve that mastery, that certainty of touch, texture, tone which informs the best of these poems and which has been noticeably absent from the work of the post-war generation. Those who with smug satisfaction proclaimed that 'a neutral tone is nowadays preferred' should have been advised to read Gascoyne, whose authentic high-seriousness, with its religious and metaphysical sub-strata, showed that it was still possible to remain in the European tradition, to affirm Christian values, and to express the universal anguish in an incandescent language of which the secret has been forgotten, or ignored and derided, by the Willie-Wetlegs (to use Lawrence's term) who still dominate the poetic scene at the present time.

When he began this Journal, Gascoyne was still in his early twenties but had already published five books. He was now losing faith in the surrealism which he had been among the first to publicise and support in Britain. He was studying intensely the work of Rimbaud, Kafka, Rilke, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche—(there are moments when his journal has the depth and vision of Rilke's *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*). Although he was engaged during this period in a painful search for identity, fighting against depressive and schizoid tendencies, these pages are a marvel of lucidity. He remained vitally interested in politics, and watched with dismay the enslavement of Spain and the approach of a new world-war. He was in easy personal relationships with such men as Jouve, Tzara, Henry Miller, and with George Barker and other English poets. He saw clearly but sympathetically the failure of the Auden generation, and was right in seeking a different theory and practice of poetry. What he said then is still true today: 'One cannot properly deal with existence by being continually bland and matter-of-fact: if one is to face life unreservedly one needs more than common-sense and a dry sense of humour.' If that applied well to Isherwood, it applies even better to our Betjemans and Larkins etc. who have been fooling themselves and a degenerate public since then. But he cast the net wider than that: 'I have long held the opinion that the intelligentsia to which I belong—particularly the writers—is suffering from a deadly spiritual sickness;

and this malady has seemed to me to express itself chiefly in the form of that intellectual sophistication and detachment which betrays a latent *fundamental indifference to everything . . .*; Gascoyne's answer was 'making it my ambition to become a "subjective" thinker, in the Kierkegaardian sense, an "existential" thinker (to become which first entails becoming a *real* person with a unique existence.)'

Gascoyne notes in this book that he belonged to the European rather than the English tradition: that was quite right except that, in my view, no English poet can afford to neglect the European tradition. Since the War, the cash-nexus has encouraged our poets to turn towards America and thus to neglect their true roots. There is not much hope, either, for those who imagine that the world ends at Hull, Oxford, or Liverpool. Our provincial versifiers should read this book, then turn back to see what the young Gascoyne made of his dilemma in the poems published in 1943, since when there has been little sign of any poet with his potential genius emerging in this land. Maybe it is not too late for some of them to be rescued?

FRANCIS SCARFE

DAVID JONES

DAVID JONES: *The Dying Gaul and other writings*, edited by Harman Grisewood (Faber and Faber £8.50)

RENÉ HAGUE: *A Commentary on The Anathemata of David Jones* (Christopher Skelton £7.50)

David Jones died in October 1974, a few days before the Feast of All Saints, which would also have been his seventy-ninth birthday. To some readers, I suspect, he remains something of a cult-figure: a Londoner born, who yet laid claim to powerful affinities with the land of his fathers, Wales; a convert to Roman Catholicism and a close friend of Eric Gill; and a writer whose works could seem to baffle the common reader, with their complex of associations. His first book, *In Parenthesis*, drew on his experiences as a 'front-fighter' in the First World War (and on a great deal more besides), and it was acclaimed by T. S. Eliot as a work of genius. But recognition on a larger front has been slow in coming, undoubtedly because of the plain fact that David Jones is not an easy writer.

The reader needs help, if he is to find a way into the intricate marvels of the texts; David Jones provided a number of valuable clues to what he was about in a collection of essays published in 1959, under the title *Epoch and Artist*. Now comes what could be regarded as a sequel to that first collection, *The Dying Gaul*, edited by an old friend of David Jones, Harman Grisewood. It tells something of the way in which an artist's mind exercises itself on some of the problems which face him, in his role not only as *homo sapiens*, but *homo faber*. There is a brief autobiographical introduction, taken largely from transcripts of tape-recordings, followed by some fourteen pieces on various aspects of our cultural inheritance, and turning often to that deep concern for what David Jones called 'the Celtic thing'. The most substantial item is an introduction to Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the poem for which David Jones made a remarkable series of illustrative copper engravings in 1928. Here, we find the stimulus of a fertile and creative imagination responding to a very considerable poetic creation.

There is much in *The Dying Gaul* to engage the attention, and to illuminate a number of highways and byways. But, of course, it leads the reader, very properly, back (or forward, as the case may be) to the poetry of David Jones. To him, poetry meant 'an effective recalling of something loved . . . a kind of *anamnesis*'. In his case, that recalling led him by long and wandering ways, and although he took pains to assist the reader with notes on the way

(regarding them not as an affectation, but a common courtesy), yet the reader welcomes the services of a guide when approaching the complexities of David Jones's greatest work, *The Anathemata* was first published in 1952. W. H. Auden thought it 'very probably the finest long poem written in English this century', but it is still a daunting piece to come to grips with: the 'deposits' of this island ('deposits' being a key-word for the poet), the myth and the Christian liturgy, 'the living, dying, or dead traditions in which one has oneself participated or heard of . . . things received in childhood . . . your word-hoard . . .'—all these strands, and more, make up the splendid texture of *The Anathemata*. René Hague's *Commentary* is itself a masterpiece of another kind, unravelling and elucidating the complexities of this extraordinary piece. It is certainly one of the most lucid and helpful books you will find anywhere, and the fact that it helps the reader on his way to the heart of a great poem is, I believe, sufficient commendation of the service René Hague has rendered to his friend of many years, David Jones, and to hosts of readers who have yet to come to know and love *The Anathemata*.

PETER ORR

SPEAKING IN MANY TONGUES

ROBERT FRIEND: *Selected Poems* (Seahorse Press, London, £2.00)

This is the first selection of Robert Friend's work to be published in England, although his poems have been appearing in periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic for a number of years. It includes poems from *Shadow on the Sun* and *Salt Gifts* (USA) and *The Practice of Absence* (Israel). Born in New York, Robert Friend currently lectures in English and American literature at the University of Jerusalem.

The elements that have contributed to this poet's inner landscape are diverse. The very disparate cultural and linguistic experiences have been integrated into a markedly individual way of looking at the world. Similarly, the voice that ranges through a considerable variety of tones (lyric to epigrammatic, sardonic to rumbustious) and forms (classical to free verse) is unmistakably his own.

The Complicated Lover makes a good starting point from which to explore this selection. The informal couplets disguise a tightly worked out vicious circle, an uroboros with a sting in the tail. The imagery of the four stanzas is characteristically blended: hints of the Bible, classical Greek poetry and neo-romanticism.

He was at sixes and sevens
with all his heavens.
Take love. Was there ever a face
(no matter how fine) or grace
(given the leisure to assess)
whose defect or excess
he was not disappointed with?
Love always turned to myth,
not an ancient gleam of gold,
but brass. And once more sold
down the river, he turned his leaf over,
the complicated lover.

Friend is at ease with his lyricism in *My Little Columbus*, about his cat.

Green-eyed astronomer
of white moons,
inquisitor
of mouseholes,
sleuth of savours,
where have you absconded
with your shadow?

Some of the most impressive moments are in poems like *At The Top* or *The Love Birds*, poems of desperation and outrage. These are all the more powerful for the elegance of their control.

MARK VILHER

A FAMILY CHRONICLE

JON STALLWORTHY: *A Familiar Tree*, with Drawings by David Gentleman (Chatto and Windus, London and O.U.P., Oxford, 1978, £2.75)

Poets who set out to write a book of a *poem*, as opposed to a collection of poems, are, today, confronted with some formidable obstacles. Narrative, historical poems of the *Sordello*, *Sohrab and Rustum* variety are out of the question. Homer is impossible to imitate. Pound rather put an end to the envying of Dante. We lack the necessary faith and mythology (and there are too many skilled translators) to do justice to 'grand' themes that anyway seem to lend themselves to fiction or drama. And yet the urge to write long poems persists.

Jon Stallworthy—in some ways like Robert Lowell—has found a way of using his own family history for a mythology without sentimentalizing it. *A Familiar Tree* takes for its characters ancestors of the present Stallworthys who began as 'unremembered eighteenth- and nineteenth-century graziers' in a remote village in Buckinghamshire and who, owing to agricultural difficulties, wars, religious conversions and profound faith, found themselves, at the beginning of this century, missionaries to the Marquesas Island in the Pacific. The story is a consecutive narration by various people of the past whom Stallworthy approaches in his first poem, *At the Church of St John Baptist Preston Bisset*—written as from May, 1974

Let me go down to them and learn
what they learnt on their journeys.
And in the looted cavern
of the skull, let me restore
their sight, their broken speech, before
from these worn steps or steps like these
speechless to the speechless I return.

Despite the dramatic setting and method of his poem, Stallworthy is primarily a lyricist. The best poems are songs.

Spring come early, spring come late,
When the oak put on its leaves,
The martin and the swallow
Would build beneath the eaves.
But since squire 'closed the common
Men take the road to town
And thatch where nestlings grew and flew
The wind and rain pull down.

*Spring come early or late today,
The birds o' the parish are vanisht away.*

Because most of the lyrics occur towards the beginning of *A Familiar Tree*, there is a slight fall off as the end becomes more dramatic, more terse and, in language, more modern. I think, too, it was a mistake to include the overly anthologized poem, *The Almond Tree* as a part of this family sequence, although it belongs, of course, to the Stallworthy story. Perhaps the story becomes too claustrophobically Stallworthy as it proceeds into the twentieth-century. The danger of using the self as a character is that you can't escape its weight. Compared to the imagined personae, Jon Stallworthy comes over too strongly as Jon Stallworthy.

And yet it is wrong to quibble about what is essentially an excellent and nicely constructed book. The missionary letters from the Marquesas are particularly moving, briefly and stoically accounting for horrors that might have been ghoulish written by a less delicate pen—

27 January 1855

My fever by God's grace abating, I
cut coffins until noon—the smallest one
from my own flesh for my own flesh—while my
dear partner sewed and Apu dug the grave
(breaking a mattock blade). When all was done,
we buried them in the breadfruit grove.
Eight in the earth and seven gathered round
to hear the words of comfort, which a flock
of clamorous parakeets all but drowned.
Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.

ANNE STEVENSON

BOOK FOR COLLECTORS

India Love Poems, Translated by Tambimuttu, illustrated by John Piper (Poetry London and Paradine, No. 4 of the new PL Series, £250, with a Piper original £450)

The sheer magnificence of this book evoked a strange variety of responses in me confined perhaps to a quirkiness in myself, perhaps a weakness in a digestive system too long nurtured on a Puritanical diet of paperbacks, so that it found such richness difficult to swallow.

Its very size (22 inches by 16 or 559 mm by 406 mm for those of the mathematical avant-garde) printed upon '200 gramme Arches Velin pure rag deckle edged paper (no less), the binding of pure undyed Tussah silk and niger morocco' the whole presented 'in a sandalwood panelled case.' And what's more, by the way, 'in an unconditionally limited edition'. Nor, you are firmly warned, will Tambimuttu's translations of the poems nor John Piper's illustrations be either repeated or reproduced before the year 2027 . . . * Pause here to recover from the shock, to say nothing of the unpleasant reminder that oneself and most of one's favourite friends will not be around at that far-distant date to be tempted a second time.

So much for Response No. 1, which upon being analysed reveals a nasty mixture of meanness of spirit, moral cheeseparing, and that cowardly self-righteousness aroused in us by the inevitable strictures of our present economic shrinkage.

Response No. 2: Do poems as voluptuously beautiful, as immediately pleasing, need anything other than to be stitched and bound into some wrapper that will keep them in sufficiently proper order and decent shape that one may read them again and yet again and with every reading regain that sensuous beauty with which in our own poetical heritage Elizabethan poems abound?

Response No. 3, following closely upon the others, answers with some asperity that all this lies at the very heart of the matter: even though a beautiful woman need no extraneous ornament, nonetheless it is a homage, a tribute to her loveliness when she is splendidly adorned, then one can gaze upon her with a wonder tinged with worship.

Here then is the appositeness of this exquisite book, for the adornment is of a taste and elegance, the illustrations of a grace and movement that are indeed an offering that the poetry merits. And with what spontaneous delight one finds in them, one and all, the right

* I can assure Mrs Yehudi Menuhin this is meant to be a Collector's Edition of the more comprehensive and differently illustrated American edition, published in the fifties. *PL* will be publishing a paperback and hardbound library edition next year.

true centre of love once more; of love unfragmented, not separated by fumbling, untrained fingers into a sorry series of unconnected particles, as satisfying as the dissected crumbs of a stale cake. You will not find functional sex operating like some interior engine, spark-plugs intended solely for the instant elimination of physical tensions. You will not find those precious and private words, the erstwhile exclusive property of the act of love now as worn and debased as our daily currency, tossed about bereft of all value and symbolic significance, albeit they are there, deftly and sparingly placed within the context of the lovely lines that carry them. Neither will you detect the stern strictures of a religious order intended to serve as an effective social virtue no doubt, but which have, in fact, led ineluctably to the shame, the guilt and the snigger.

What is it you will find then? Firstly, the full significance of man/woman, as body and soul conjoined. Here are 'The very lists of love', the abandon that is born of lack of self-consciousness, aeons before the Sage of Vienna in an attempt to rescue us from the ossified edicts of the organized Church, made an unholy-than-ever mess of our primitive and natural instincts than had any jolly Cardinal before him. You will find love as bodily service, as delicate sensuality, as total interdependence, as willing surrender, both an alchemy and a discipline as the Indians show it in the *Khama-Sutra*. And together with all this, entwined in the fantasy one feels the langorous quality of the passion, that enviable infinity of time offered to the emotions and, seasoning it all, a delightful touch of dry humour . . . Listen to this:

When through the supremacy of love
Women begin to do things
Even God is afraid
To put obstacles in their path.

Who needs Women's Lib? Who indeed? Here is power of the subtlest kind, not only the 'femme fatale' in the physical sense of attraction, but a cosmic sense of womanhood connected with man and the Deity, and recognized in her role as partner in the supremacy of love and thereby the whole meaning of life. Human nature is realigned with Nature itself, the pulse of love-making with the rhythm of the universe. Absent is that dread feeling of disconnection, of dislocation which our industrial, commercial world has brought, crowding itself between our true being in terms physical, spiritual, psychological and metaphysical, like some great iron barricade we must forever try to scale before we can find satisfaction or peace of mind or body. Small wonder we invent ever more blatant and artificial and jejune means in our fruitless search; shouting in the carnal dark to keep our pecker up, perhaps?

There is strangely little sadness in these poems; in that way they are less lyrical than the greatest English ones. You will not find the bittersweet undertone that creates the unmatched harmonic of a Shakespeare Sonnet. Here there is mostly the closeness, the happiness of proximity. So often in English poetry there is the anguish of separation, the cry of longing, the pleading for reciprocation.

O Western wind, when wilt thou blow
That the small rain down can rain
Christ that my love were in my arms
And I in my bed again!

could never have been written by an Indian lover from the heat and colour of his native land.

So, in these pages you will find warmth and a certain wit, sensuality and good humour, beauty of sentiment and gratitude for both the giving and the taking of love. On one fact one can be sure that the poets themselves would totally have agreed:

'Whoever love, if he do not pursue the right, true end of love
He's one who goes to sea for nothing but to make him sick!'

There the differences of approach disappear and common ground is truly found. There, nothing of that intellectual taint is in the way, bringing in its train moral scruples and all those other horrible bits of barbed wire that make all embraces bleed and scar. Donne could surmount this so supremely. In the eleventh Elegy's last two lines:

'Filled with her love would I be rather grown
Mad with much heart than ideot with none.'

And simply compare this with *Moonface*:

'Shall I enter into you
Or shall I swallow you whole?
Love is supreme.'



DIANA MENUHIN

PLATO AND IRIS

IRIS MURDOCH: *The Fire and the Sun* (O.U.P. £2.50)

Anybody who is at all seriously concerned with the nature of poetry, and of art generally, should read this brilliantly and lucidly written book. Miss Murdoch re-examines the whole question of Plato's attitude to the arts. The paradox, of course, is that Plato, a brilliant artist himself in his Dialogues, accorded a low place to the arts in the scheme of things. Miss Murdoch is both a philosopher by training and a distinguished practitioner of the art of the novel, and is therefore able to see the problem, as it were, from the inside.

The Greeks produced some of the greatest art that the world has seen, yet they had no special word for art as such, and did not regard the artist, as we tend to do, as someone of particular spiritual authority. Their word for art, *Techne*, simply meant craft or skill. The artist and the poet were in no respects superior to the potter and the carpenter, or the physician. Though, in the case of the poet, there are traces of a perhaps more primitive attitude which regarded him as a man possessed by a god and carried away by divine frenzy. Plato's theory of Forms (or ideas), by which every object our senses encounter in this world is merely an imperfect copy of an eternal archetype, compelled him to regard the artist, in imitating these objects, as providing only a copy of a copy, thus placing himself at a still further remove from reality. Neo-Platonism, with Plotinus, attempted to get round this by claiming that the artist's real model was the Form itself. Miss Murdoch seems to brush Plotinus's argument aside rather cavalierly, as she does the somewhat similar view of Schopenhauer. After all, Plotinus's ideas did underpin the great art, music and poetry of the Renaissance. Schopenhauer's theories less certainly led to great art, though they do underlie the music of Wagner and the whole European Symbolist movement in poetry down to Yeats.

In regard to poetry, Plato in his early Dialogues, the *Ion* and the *Phaedrus*, did accept the view of the poet as inspired by a divine madness, but for him this madness itself was suspect. The poet was not in control of his art, and claimed a false authority and expertise in matters he knew nothing of. In a notorious passage of *The Laws* we are told that the dramatic poet is politely to be conducted to the frontiers of the republic and told to go. In the *Republic* itself Plato allows, as Miss Murdoch points out, just the same scope for the arts as is accorded them in contemporary Eastern European states. They are simply to be occupied in re-enforcing the official morality and ideology. In his advocacy of simplicity, Plato comes perhaps even closer

to the situation as it obtained in Maoist China during the Cultural Revolution. Simple folk-song and military music alone are acceptable.

Plato was a puritan, and Miss Murdoch shows how close his attitude was to that of other great puritans, including Kant and Tolstoy, the latter also a supremely great artist who felt compelled to stand against all art that was not simplistically didactic. Miss Murdoch is also, one suspects, a puritan, and goes quite a long part of the way with Plato. Her argument is full of insights which bring Plato alive. She shows, for instance, how Plato's distrust of the art of writing itself is paralleled by Wittgenstein's reluctance to commit himself to writing, and by some of the strategies of Kierkegaard. She also draws a remarkably parallel between the psychology of Plato and that of Freud. Both see life as essentially a journey from illusion to enlightenment, and the psyche as hierarchically divided between lower and higher selves, though they differ in what part of the psyche is to be accorded sovereignty.

As Miss Murdoch points out, the concept of the artist as one possessing special spiritual authority emerged some time after 1750, with the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement. Yet in poetry at least, the poet's own doubt of the validity of his art, and of the legitimacy of language itself, appeared almost immediately. It is there in the Prologue to Keats's *Fall of Hyperion*, and it is a recurrent note in the poetry of the twentieth century. It is there in Wilfred Owen ('the poetry is in the pity'), and in Auden ('Art is not life and cannot be/A midwife to society') as well as in Marianne Moore's 'I too dislike it'. Eliot's Sweeney says 'I got to use words when I talk to you' and Eliot himself in *The Four Quartets* 'the poetry does not matter'. Miss Murdoch does not mention this recurrent anguish of the poets. But she lays stress on the negative aspects of art and poetry—the false authority which they claim, and what she terms their collusion with Plato's two enemies, sophistry and magic. 'Bad art is a lie about the world.' 'The artist's worst enemy is his eternal companion, the cosy dreaming ego, the dweller in the vaults of *eikasia*. Of course the highest art is powered by the force of an individual unconscious mind, but then so is the highest philosophy; and in both cases technique is useless without divine fury.' By *eikasia* is meant the mere play of delusive images. The title of Miss Murdoch's book is taken from Plato's well-known myth of the prisoners in the cave, their backs to the light and beholding only the shadows of the things which are carried between them and the fire which is behind them, and between them and the sun. The modern equivalent of this, she hints at one point, is the television.

In speaking of the false authority claimed by the artist, Miss Murdoch is inclined to contrast the Western with the Eastern concepts of the relation between art and religion, and even to show some sympathy with the anti-ickonic attitude of Islam. Yet she is, in the end, too much of an artist herself not to attempt to meet Plato. As she says, 'Great works of art often do seem like perfect particulars, and we seem here to enjoy that "extra" knowledge which is denied to us at the end of the *Theaetetus*'. She is attempting a justification of art by using arguments implicit in Plato himself—and in so doing does not seem to me to be so far from Plotinus's point of view, which earlier on she had discounted. Many difficulties, of course, remain. How, for instance, are we to define great art, since there is admittedly no absolute science of criticism? And what is one to do about a great poet like Yeats, in whom, it seems to me, the true poet is inextricably mixed up with the magician, and the sophist? But the fact that Miss Murdoch's argument prompts one to ask such questions is a measure of the cogency and the stimulating quality of her writing.

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS

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ART SECTION

TOKESHI: AN ARTIST IN SEARCH OF A VOCABULARY

Tokeshi believes that complexity is no more important than simplicity and that reality can be contained within an inch. Along with Dostoevsky, who said 'Freedom is madness,' he does not believe in total freedom. He restricts himself.

Whereas the units of Van Gogh's language are bold and large—his brushstrokes are sometimes as wide as an inch—Bill, in his search for a modern vocabulary, has pared down his to a zero point. In such early works as *ART MACHINE* (opposite), his units are meaningless dots. He has no ponderous statements to make. The entire corpus of art up to modern times is full of 'statements'. But, in his early works, the idea of 'nothing' was very important to Tokeshi. He was looking for *NOTHING*.

To use Bill's words, 'I represent the dot as a non-dimensional point. So I'm really using an alphabet that is meaningless since my dot is also meant to be invisible, like those atoms, the most potent source of energy we know, which are invisible to our eyes unaided by the tools of science. The scientists are my mentors. In many ways, they are the people in possession of the right vocabulary for a truly contemporary art. I want to start with nothing. Jackson Pollock, I think, had the same hankering for "Nothing" but, as you know, angling for nothing he ended up with a whole bloody universe. Realizing this, I did not want to create another universe as Rembrandt, Cezanne, or Picasso did. I stuck to my concept of zero or "nothing".'

It is well known that the Indians first postulated the mathematical concept of 'zero' and the buddhist nirvana. Buddhism is reformed Hinduism and according to Hinduism, nirvana is actually the Supreme Energy or Brahma and *prana* (flux of Energy) out of which all the forms we know, animal, vegetable or mineral, are continually thrust forth and then absorbed back. This is the central idea in *ART MACHINE*. 'You see, I start with dots in the centre of the piece of paper and as I proceed, they amalgamate to form material shapes, elephants, bears and tigers, say, but I negate them all as I proceed, immersing them in the all-pervasive chaos which, in a sense, is nothing, although it is everything. When I get to the edges of the paper with my dots, after having denied all the material shapes that came to mind, some forms may be suggested at the edges but, in the end, I've created chaos—or have I?'

The simplification of Bill's language, culminating in the dots, began in 1958 with *NUDE* and *PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN*. In these, he has reduced broad brush strokes to the shorthand of a very much attenuated linear stroke.

Constantly in search of reality and the meaning of himself, Tokeshi made a bold new beginning in 1960. Having explored the meaning of 'nothing', which has the connotation of 'inscape' or interiority, he wondered what forms would emerge from the 'skin' or exteriority of things. He also wondered what it hid.

He chose plastic dolls as suitable subjects for his enquiry. He wished to integrate the visible with the hidden, the exterior with the interior. He cut up the plastic dolls to see what was hidden, inside—probably he hoped to find himself as a foetus within one of them—and made intricate designs with the pieces. He has destroyed most of the 'collages', preserving two of them which seemed most significant in the discovery of himself. The first anthropoid shape, in the manner of his first 'collage', which had incidentally reduced a three-dimensional object into a two-dimensional one, has freely outstretched limbs, whereas his last collage has the aspect of a foetus with indrawn arms and legs. 'There is a denial of linear time here, I think,' Tokeshi says.

After the period of the doll 'Collages', Tokeshi returned once more to the concept of zero, to chaos, in his search for a vocabulary, and to see what would emerge from it. And he wished to integrate the states of consciousness he had explored. He wished to bring the 'skin' to the inside, the outward consciousness to the inner. So he bored holes—units of his modern and scientific vocabulary—into black boxes to expose their red insides. The double vision, the marriage of black and red, the outside of himself with the inner man, was startling and illuminating. It was what he wanted. To demonstrate what it meant before he had drilled these holes, he had on show a thick, black wooden box, without holes, which grimly warns of the unenlightened mind which has not yet become aware of itself.

As an Oriental, searching for his identity, the nub of his thoughts in these sculptures is truly Buddhistic. I also think that his preoccupation is with Action and Non-Action, which is the theme of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the most sacred book of the Hindus.

The contemplation of the inner self, man himself, and his relationship to the universe has been the mode of the greatest Oriental sages from Rumi to the Buddhas of India. That Tokeshi's boxes are anthropomorphic is clear from the way he has determined their spatial volumes. To determine a modular, his wife drew an outline of Tokeshi on a piece of paper, and from this he determined his own volume in cubic inches which was 4000. So he constructed a box of 2000 cubic inches which would accommodate half of him and, then, another of 4000 inches which could contain the totality of himself. Then, there is another which could contain twice of his volume.

In his final phase, Tokeshi has replaced the metal in his boxes with glass mirrors which make these constructions scintillate and pulse with the reality of a living cell . . . microcosm of life . . . the life unit. However, he wonders whether his present phase will lead him anywhere. 'The answer may lie elsewhere', he says.

T.

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