the road north

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Alec Finlay (1966–), artist and poet, lives and works in Edinburgh. Working across a wide range of media and forms, from microtonal sculpture, mapping and journeys, book and print works, to audio-visual and new technology, much of Finlay's work considers how we as a culture, or cultures, relate to landscape and ecology. He was the first AiR at BALTIC, and has exhibited at the Sydney Biennale. Recent artist projects include Sweeney's Bothy, an artist-residency hut for the Isle of Eigg, and taigh, Scotland's national memorial for organ and tissue donors, installed in Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden. Among his recent poetry collections are *Be My Reader* (2012), A Company of Mountains (2013), today today (2013), and a-ga (2014). He is represented by Ingleby Gallery and publishes artist blogs at www.alecfinlay.com

Some other publications by Ken Cockburn

Souvenirs and Homelands

The Order of Things: an anthology of Scottish sound, pattern and concrete poems (edited, with Alec Finlay)

The Dancers Inherit the Party: Early stories, plays & poems by Ian Hamilton Finlay (edited)

Intimate Expanses: XXV Scottish Poems 1978-2002

(edited, with Robyn Marsack)

The Season Sweetens / Die Saison Versüssend: Football Haiku 2006 For "visions" read "meteors": found poems, and an alphabet, from the

John Murray Archive

Feathers & Lime: translations from the German

On the flyleaf

CENTUM: 100 Years of Baillie Gifford 1908-2008 (with David Faithfull)

OVERHEARD OVERLOOKED: found poems

Ink (with ~in the fields)

Snapdragon: poems by Arne Rautenberg (translated)

While yet we may

Some other publications by Alec Finlay

Ludwig Wittgenstein: There WhereYou Are Not (with Guy Moreton & Michael Nedo)

siren (with Chris Watson)

Two fields of wheat seeded with a poppy-poem (with Caitlin DeSilvey)

Nose's Point: a coastal walk (with Thomas A. Clark)

Specimen Colony (with Jo Salter)

One Hundred Year Star-Diary (with Denis Moskowitz & Ray Sharples)

Mesostic Remedy (with Laurie Clark & Linda France)

Mesostic Interleaved (with Ken Cockburn)

Ian Hamilton Finlay: Selections (ed.)

A Company of Mountains

Question Your Teaspoons

today today today

Thorns

Sweeney on Eigg

a-ga: on mountains (with Ken Cockburn & Luke Allan)

Ken Cockburn & Alec Finlay

the road north

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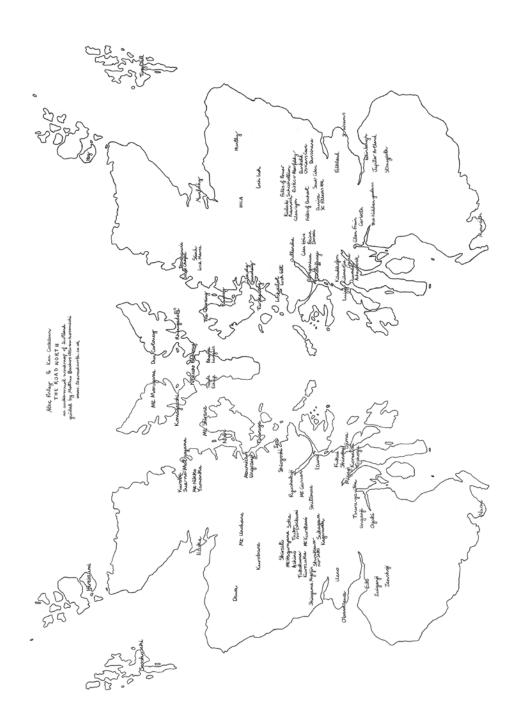
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Setting Out

so, when was it
I first had that dream
of roving the glens
up and down
guided by Basho's oku?

some morning
I will wake on Pillow Hill
with a matinal willow
warbling at the window
books on the bed
my heart in a fankle

to see clouds and mountains in the far-away to be on the road north where paths of moss and crottle follow peaty waters

some morning I will cross over to the Kingdom shrouded in mist tracking back to the origin of things sipping tea from a shell

I will how learn to tell burns that run lochan to lochan from the wide river that flows freely to the sea I will turn down some other glen east-west into low sun scooping shelter from a mountain wind to plant two rowans

by a white croft waiting for a boy whose supple hand will gently twist the pliant saplings so they grow entwined

ten years on pink again in the Park and a flitting in the offing as I swap one view for another

familiar streets

Pilrig Rosslyn Bonnington

exchanged for hills

Lomond The Buachaille Roshven

it's time to pack

old pink and new orange maps a picnic blanket for the dog yellow bottles of Rescue Remedy miso packets, rice noodles, oatcakes, flasks and chocolate

compass, gazetteers, pens pencils for rubbings wee Moleskine notebooks hokku-labels for trees and paper wishes

a handful of CDs

Neil Young's Jukebox Anne Briggs Dylan's 'Highlands'

mind the teas

Iron Warrior Monkey on the Mountain Black Ruby Gabalong Grasshopper Oolong

and the whiskies

Glenkinchie Tullibardine Bruichladdich An Cnoc and the Super Nikka! come summer we'll name our band

shafts of sun

come fall we'll name our album

bands of rain

now we're leaving behind lanes of gean blossoming in The Meadows heading off on the *hosomichi* to look for Shirakawa

now we'll let our looking survey Scotland from Monreith to Poolewe setting out to see the best view of all where the land meets the sky

First Views of the Foothills

what is a journey?

a journey is the day it's impossible to stay

the day *there* means more than *here*

the day you enter the view from your window our beginning is a walk at Jupiter Artland, Bonnington House, West Lothian

far over the Firth
north through the thin
line of pale ash
over the pommel
of Binny Craig
noble Illieston
the pinkish bings
of Albyn, Faucheldean, Greendykes
relic spoil turning green

the Forth's strutting span of rivet and iron Mossmorran's fractionated cloud lifting above Bishop Hall and domed West Lomond

today we can see to where we'll meet ourselves next week up by the Yad blackthorn winter should be over now but there's a fresh sprinkling of snow on East Cairn reckoning by the old ways it's Mayday and Bashō's anniversary so let's bawm the thorn with the riches of rags