

Be My Reader

Other Books for My Readers

Atoms of Delight (ed.)
Love for Love (ed., with John Burnside)
Without Day (ed.)
Wish I Was Here (ed., with Kevin MacNeil)
The Way to Cold Mountain (ed.)
The Order of Things (ed., with Ken Cockburn)
Justified Sinners (ed., with Ross Birrell)
Football Haiku (ed.)
Labanotation: the Archie Gemmill goal (with Robin Gillanders)
Irish (2) (with Guy Moreton & Zoë Irvine)
Wind Blown Cloud
football moon
Bynames (ed.)
turning toward living (ed.)
Mesostic herbarium (ed.)
The Book of Questions (ed.)
Wind Blown Clouds
Ludwig Wittgenstein: There Where You Are Not (with Guy Moreton & Michael Nedo)
Avant-Garde English Landscape
THREE RIVERS CROSSWORD (with Beth Rowson & Sandy Balfour)
Three Estates (with Gavin Wade & Paul Conneally)
siren (with Chris Watson)
Dance Music Dance Trace (with Andrew Hodson)
Thought-Cloud Jotter
Mesostic Laboratorium (ed.)
Two fields of wheat seeded with a poppy-poem (with Caitlin DeSilvey)
Nose's Point: a coastal walk (with Thomas A. Clark & Alex Hodby)
Specimen Colony (with Jo Salter)
One Hundred Year Star-Diary (with Denis Moskowitz & Ray Sharples)
Mesostic Remedy (with Laurie Clark & Linda France)
Mesostic Tea (One) (with Susan Tichy & Adrian Lurssen)
Mesostic Tea (Two)
Mesostic Interleaved (with Ken Cockburn)

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The Wittgenstein House (Skjolden)

Something really does happen to most people who go into the north—they become at least aware of the creative opportunity which the physical fact of the country represents and ... come to measure their own work and life against that rather staggering creative possibility—they become, in effect, philosophers.

— Glenn Gould

•

Russell said it would be dark.
Wittgenstein said he hated daylight.

Russell said it would be lonely.
Wittgenstein said he prostituted his mind
talking to intelligent people.

Russell said he was mad.
Wittgenstein said God preserve him from sanity.

There's the sign across the lake

The famous Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) owned in 1914 a hut here in Skjolden. The foundations of this hut you can see on the other side of Eidsvatnet. Wittgenstein worked there with the manuscripts of the Tractatus and of the Philosophical Investigations.

I went back to Skjolden
and the dark circle
of mountains

to look for my own place
in the glen
of a shadowed world

where what I find
is shown in
how I think and live.

In the north day
gives way to night
slowly evening

stretches for miles
through a landscape
suffused with light.

The clouded Fjell peaks
are gone again
into white lift.

There is seeing, there is rain,
a smirr slowly
gives way to sun.

At Vasbakken the water-
fall gleams whitely
in the dark.

What I forget each time
is how the rush of falls
fills the valley,

as just under my window
the burn clinks
softly away.

Luster fjord is black
lake blue river
eddies copper-green.

The damp makes me
rheumy, glandy
eyes gone bleary

with my nose sunk
in tea tree and some
sun my only remedy.

*The human body
is the best picture
of the human soul.*

Make your way past
the wooden sign

WITTGENSTEIN

Along the lane wild rasp
& nettles line the verges,
puddles fill the track.

All the small fields meet up
in corners, each with its
own suitable barn—

stone huts, wood shacks
or corrugated iron lean-tos;
stacks of felled thinnings

like pencils in a box
and neat xylotheques
of peeling birch logs.

Now step into the wood
through willowherb, elder,
rowan & birch.

The path walks up
through Guy's arch
of bending branches,

then down beside the lake—
take care over slippery rocks,
ferns & brambles.

You'll see the walled harbour
where his row boat anchored.

Follow the spray-marked 'W's

on the two scarred findlings
that seem to be resting on
each other's shoulders.

To your right are still tides
of scree winter washed
down the slope

splashed with grey & orange lichen.
Then, when the trees get too thick,
turn and zig-zag

up the steep path.
The metal hoops
of Wittgenstein's pulley

are still fastened to the cliff -
the rig at the foot stolen
for some professor's trophy.

Here, on the plateau, perched
above the lake, the foundations
are a man-made rock.

Stand where the verandah was
& look out over
the grey curtain of mountains

their rippling reflections.
See the view that W chose:
a landscape utterly simple.

the sky is so high clouds pass
gentle breath rises from the lake
huffs of white stratus gather low
in the valley flexuous weather
nebulous shapes form & fall
draw up sheer cliffs to sky
touch stone plumes ravel unravel
in the space between

droplets
on
branches
&
soft
mosses
&
along
the
tears
of
the
spiders'
webs
my
boots
brush
back
to
water

The immediate is a stream