

Arc & Sill



# Arc & Sill

Poems  
1979–2009

David Lloyd

Shearsman Books  
& New Writers' Press

First published in the United Kingdom in 2012 by  
Shearsman Books  
50 Westons Hill Drive  
Emersons Green  
Bristol  
BS16 7DF

and in the Republic of Ireland by  
New Writers' Press  
61 Clarence Mangan Road  
South Circular Road  
Dublin 8

Shearsman Books Ltd Registered Office  
30–31 St. James Place, Mangotsfield, Bristol BS16 9JB  
(this address not for correspondence)

<http://www.shearsman.com/>

ISBN 978-1-84861-211-2

Copyright © David Lloyd, 2012.

The right of David Lloyd to be identified as the author  
of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the  
Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act of 1988.  
All rights reserved.

# Contents

Vega / 7

Arc & Sill / 27

Change of State / 67

Taropatch / 93

Coupures / 111

Notes / 149



Vega

I drew a thin thread  
    through pain, deep  
in the hide  
    the gathering mole-

work blindly, a sharp  
    inhalation of breath  
through the teeth  
    so

backstitch, back-  
    stitch in the spine  
slashed with his own strings

hooded,  
    through-sounded, lip  
split into singing

Si1

V

Mouthstar, your uneven rays flare and protest  
yet the wound was foreseen, as if  
it was always prepared to meet you  
stepping up into its fierce enclosure

willingly you greet its sparse gift  
of focus: all the filmy  
unravelling threads of your unrest,

the fraying, unsettled fragments  
of the discomposed, gather  
and assemble in its rough eye.

Unexpected constellation, aperture  
where the dark finds its darkness,  
the sewn lips their suture,  
ragged seam of the star-white scar

## VI

strange, how an absence breaks us open:  
    is it the sheer scalpel of parting  
nicking my taut skin, stored resin

bursting, congealing, a gem  
    fraying the light into threadsongs,  
fretted lace of our speech?

kernel that thought itself a shell  
    breaking open in its turn  
a white song spinning off

into the dark of what's to come:  
    out of a backdraft buffeted  
by passing blades a bird

spun in the sun, white leaf  
    on azure, turning, falling  
fascinating skypearl, all

your power is in your wound, the grain  
chafes in your keeping

## VII

Things fall from the sky  
this bright feather, say,  
from who knows what  
remote disaster

over such desolate lands  
you step, sole trader,  
swayed with bearing, salt  
cargoes in your eyes and that

inexplicable smile  
no landing shelters

## VIII

A stone wind  
sheds its whorls:  
entail of feeling  
torn into place

your salt print  
scores the sheet  
seams and rips  
the straightened cloth

## Change of State

## VI

Hey, poet, say, what is it you're at? I make space  
As in Matera, in the midday sun, dwellings  
Step back from a white noise. Space rends like a split pod,  
Shaking out the precious spoor on the arena,  
Not a random squeak troubles the arrival, time  
And again a like flock motions some constellation.

Hey, poet, what are you getting at? Honey spreads  
Like the swarm sips from his parting lips, a rumour  
Leaks through the components as an odorous snatch:  
Riddle re me, riddle re me, she comes too late,  
She speaks awry, and what she asks is where you've been,  
And what you speak is where she ends and turns again.

She speaks ajar, the aggregate asunder: render  
The cacomeme babble towards the fourth star,  
Form resists and saps you along a further limb,  
Music drifts out on the draught, notes let loose tumble  
From the keys and through the frame. From off the level  
The piano planes over an azure expanse.

## VII

All the museums were closed and so we missed the tomb,  
Drawn away now to aesthetic power. The grass grows  
Greener where there's something missed. Honeydew ice is  
Cool and cheap and life the better for it, rinsing  
Backtastes from uneasy spittle. How they reserved  
The figure for himself alone, suspended

In a dry dark, as the voices of the walkers  
Fade to a confused noise, pausing, hesitating  
On the path. So an unmappable gap folds under  
In the unbroken plane, while loose ends unravel  
Through a sudden draught. Out of this space the flicker  
Comes to light, look how his soar's like likening,

As a clear song rose ahead of the swarm, urged on  
By the spirit of the hive they diminish to  
A fleck in the blue—alive, alight,

arrested:

If he gives one more random peep, give him a sharp  
Knee bend right in his transfer characteristic:  
To a white noise he's broken, and a door clicks to

## VIII

Out of the tiniest break, a wave say, it rises  
To the one who listens, ear atilt and at risk  
To the gift of opening. Where it parts, the blade twists  
And will not cease, turning

*Trennen ist dichten*, he says

And we see him diminish along the platform,  
The sundering tracks singing slowly together.

We decline in the series, stepping in the print  
Of the others, as one on a dark stair and downwards  
Out of the brittle light. Step back from the swell and  
From the things which have no ending, in the breathing  
Of spray we are small but through us it fans away  
Over the firm surge. It's as if I hear the rain

Drenching the dark green, but to that there's no return.  
The friends are gone over and in the space they left  
We step, the suspension of the ferry widening  
Across the channel. For the moment it is ours,  
The passage: they have left us our voices, singing  
A concentration of the ear against the wire.

\*