Short Attention Span
Also by Harry Guest

POETRY
A Different Darkness
Arrangements
The Cutting-Room
The Achievements of Memory
Mountain Journal
A House Against the Night
The Hidden Change
Elegies (2nd edition, 2018*)
Lost and Found
Coming to Terms
So Far
Comparisons & Conversions *
Some Times

NOVELS
Days
Lost Pictures
Time After Time
The Light and the Smoke

RADIO PLAYS
The Inheritance
The Emperor of Outer Space

TRANSLATIONS
Post-War Japanese Poetry (with Lynn Guest and Kajima Shôzô)
The Distance, The Shadows (66 Poems by Victor Hugo)
Versions
From a Condemned Cell (33 Sonnets by Jean Cassou)
A Square in East Berlin (a novel by Torsten Schulz)
Otherlands *

NON-FICTION
Another Island Country
Mastering Japanese
Traveller’s Literary Companion to Japan
The Artist on the Artist

* published by Shearsman Books
Harry Guest

SHORT ATTENTION SPAN

SAMPLER

Shearsman Books
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haiku</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornwall</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disillusion</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deity</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Geography</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rothko</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platen („Ich möchte wenn ich sterbe…”)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understatement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dusk</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee much missed</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cataract (for Mo with love)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cliffwalk</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Foreigners</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Liszt Did Once</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 A.M.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonnet No. 18 Begun Differently</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolmaster</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lassitude</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Seventh One (i.e. No VII)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Navire Night (après Marguerite Duras)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooling To-day</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warning</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shadows
The Final Verse
(from Heinès Lyrisches Intermezzo)
Sestos, Early Morning
Unpleasant Truth
Child
Then
What Haikus Are
Borders
Death
morning
Drink
F. Chopin. Préludes Op. 28, No. 20
Flat Earth, etc.
In Winter in Essex in 1959
Poetry In Schools
84
No Answer
Care
Mexico
With The Conclusion Over
In Grateful Memory of Bob Nash
Night Cats
When Though
Choice
A Certain Daughter
What Baudelaire Implied
Winter
Questionable
A Pair in Love Unknown Alone
Doves
3 A.M.
Rubáiyát
Birds
Consolations
East of Where 29
Births 29
Lovely Companions 30
April Dusk 30
Absence 30
Tasha’s Coloured Photo 31
HA IKU

green, red or golden
leaves still flutter turning black
against summer skies

CORNWALL

Brown Willy climbed so long ago
broun wennyly in ancient Celtic means
hill of the swallows

DISILLUSION

A helicopter hovering around
a land of faërie at times believed
in, longed for anyway, has ruined thought
along a certain path uphill, alone,
those yaffle-taps heard on a nearby tree
unseen.

DEITY

the future of a rose, orang-utan or arsonist
the lasting of a shadow or a star
identify precisely all the colours of the sea
tell when exactly suns will disappear
and planets too
moons also
WHEN

There’s only now, the past has vanished past recall, to-morrow’s unreliable as dreams, there’s only now once more and now again and death what then

CHINESE GEOGRAPHY

There’s a turtle that straddles the north while a scarlet bird darts through the south. When a dragon all blue roams the east the white tiger’s crossing the west.

ROTHKO

Lost on some lonely planet without hope. Eternal night. Elsewhere there’d earlier been colours of horizontal mystery to hide or show this way that way although not really present, left there not for glow. Stretches of nowhere lacking stars froze time for him for ever as he stood on grey, one greyness, and no subtlety, self-death thought of, not long to wait to cause the end.
ICELAND

a richer word ðan þankyou
ðe þrill ðat þrobs þrough þoughtfully
from þingvellir in state
ðen standing on a glacier
east of a waterfall

CONSTABLE

Sketch left on paper.
You almost see clouds ready
to move, leaves stirring.

FEBRUARY

After the rainfall,
two swans float on what was once
a field gone blue now

AGE

My Japanese dissolves alas
Like many other things –
Books, alkahest, nouns, veritas,
Truths, mediaeval kings.

Facts too: old remedies, short ways
To go back whence I came,
Jokes, long division, titles, plays,
Friends lost, that god-child’s name.