Anonymous Intruder
Anonynous Intruder

Ian Seed

Shearsman Books
Exeter
Acknowledgments


‘At Rest’ and ‘Not Enough to be Innocent’ borrow and mix phrases from Le Voleur de Talan by Pierre Reverdy.

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CONTENTS

1 — Rearrangements

The Familiar Dead 11
Rearrangement 18
Two Old Heads 19
Modulated Subtones 21
What Was Alive 22
Temporal Fix 23
Beyond Your Concern 24
Seemingly Hesitating 25
Anxious Trade 26
A Kind Of Dying 28
Anonymous Intruder 29
Check Out Girls 32
Notices 41
From a Long Way 46

2 — Voices

Recount 49
Witness 50
Broken Window 51
Mine Before Night 52
All Kinds of Dust 53
Consequences 54
The Gift 55
I That Was Near Your Heart 56
March 57
From Nowhere 58
3 — Shadows

Attitudes 61
The Only One Awake 62
Having Just Breathed 63
Shadows 64
Recognition 65
Shadow of Blade 66
Betrayal 67
Red Glow 68
White Sun 69
Authentic Life 70
Long Buried 71
At Rest 72
Not Enough to be Innocent 73
A Cry Permitted 74
Encoding 75
Dwelling 76
Charity 77
Almost 78
'It’s funny when you become aware of your heart it’s as though you can feel it beating in the sky and in nearly everything except yourself really'
— Kenneth Patchen
For J.
1

REARRANGEMENTS
Transfigured already without
my noticing, the spaces
between the notes are no longer

lonely foreigners lurking
among orthodox ranks of people
along the thoroughfare’s

busy length, but a movement
exact and entire as the widening
of your smile. This is scarcely news

yet I swerve speechless, without
a plan, bareheaded in the sun,
looking for a thing to love.
City ghosts shift ground,
eyes black with the mirth
of street children. You cannot quite
recognise the darkened version
of yourself in the window. Winding
streets have brought you here
and now you have forgotten
the way home. You sob
like a child to be allowed in.

Your shoulders merge with the canal
at your back. The familiar
dead refuse to leave.
You show me the lavish scrapbook of your life: the journey to school, the pain of being teased

or shut out in the playground, the different roads you later took which in the story

are still your kingdom. Although your remaining chances are few, you’re leaving again

to trace long shadows back to their vital source. Among the wreckage you stay afloat without noticing.
The rain was the same in each city. In my quest for comfort, I’d drained my journey of all meaning.

Further down the street she asked if I was a stranger. She’d mistaken me for someone else. For 50 bucks she offered a fleeting realm of scent and warmth. At first I was afraid to follow. I remember her goose-pimpled skin, the stocking with holes, the scattering of dead matches by the bed.
In the hotel room by the railway line
a breeze blew the curtains inward,
shifting fragments of sky.

You lay on your stomach, head pressed
into the pillow, your dress bunched
over your thighs. Afterwards

we went through endless back streets
in search of what was missing.
The summer rain steamed.

You grew tearful at the barefooted
children who dropped stones
into the bowl of a blind man.
Concentrate on the architecture, not the illness, things to make and mend. Yet it’s difficult to know where you are when the concision of guides only adds to the feeling of lostness.

You cannot or will not go home. For almost every corner or porticoed street there’s a journey through thick grey air, a face without a name at the end of it.
On the crowded tram, the accidental touch of a hand is enough to pinpoint your loneliness.

You grow open at the mouth, the city an endless thread you cannot stop unravelling.

Shadows on the street are pared away. Each face becomes beautiful and impossible seen through a moving window like dolls waving bright paper flowers and flags.
Rearrangement

When I become aware of the nakedness of the place, I hear someone laughing who is really in pain. Approaching from the other side, I recognise the tangle of lives without understanding the direction they’ve come from. My mouth is trained to form sounds as if I were expressing my own desires, my body to move as if there had never been another way of moving. For how could I be caught otherwise between pain and its expression? Yet I once dreamt of these scenes differently, without melting away, or wondering who it was they thought of when they called my name.