Below This Level
Also by Kelvin Corcoran

Robin Hood in the Dark Ages
The Red and Yellow Book (2nd edition, 2019*)
Qiryat Sepher
TCL
The Next Wave
Lyric Lyric
Melanie’s Book
When Suzy Was *
Your Thinking Tracts or Nations
New and Selected Poems *
Roger Hilton’s Sugar
Backward Turning Sea *
Not the Full Story: Six Interviews with Lee Harwood *
Hotel Shadow *
Words Through A Hole Where Once
There Was A Chimpanzee’s Face
For the Greek Spring
Radio Archilochos
Sea Table *
Facing West *
Not Much To Say Really *
Article 50

* Titles from Shearsman Books
Kelvin Corcoran

BELOW THIS LEVEL

SAMPLER

Shearsman Books
Diagnosis
SAMPLER
What the Birds Said

I sit by the window and read the poetry received. 
I can smell smoke from a neighbour’s garden, 
hear a collared dove coo, a buried piano, a distant aircraft. 
I can understand these things but in my reading 
I lose track of the world in the would-be samizdat.

I’m sorry I can’t say anything to the generous poet 
I’m sorry light is draining from the sky, 
that affective meaning has gone in darkness. 
This is not a manifesto but longing for first inscription, 
to run through the mortal trees with the fox and the rook.

To be saved by names on Rue des Hiboux and Zaventem 
I run walk run over bars of light, snow is forecast, 
a return to first things is forecast – I like that, said the rook, 
I can pick at that, I might eat it and then take off into the sky.
Run Walk Run

Again I’m off in the morning down the track
stepping through the one-time bars of light with David Bowie;
I swing swing on the monkey bars and pull faces at the cemetery,
suspended above the tilting ground in diagnostic limbo.

Come out come out companions mine,
where are we now and do you have a word to say?
I saw a woman with a three-legged dog
and various corvids posing for Bruegel.

Here’s a dawn song for Magnetic Resonance Imaging,
singing inside the tunnel of exploding stars
 to make a dark picture from sound I don’t want to see;
companions come out and fall come fall gentle rain.

* 

Localised but not metastasised.

We will use all three approaches.


Localised not metastasised.

Repeat after me.

No metastasis. No katabasis.

*
The track the trees run run walk
could be Spring that dampness
behind me the streets are clear
beggars in place, kids away to school.

This morning’s text is from the Reverend Arthur Russell,
‘Show me what the girl does to the boy, if you can get around to it.’

I’d say, don’t wait around too long for the demo,
I’d say Melanie I remember you, dark girl in the high flat under
the eaves,
the city a map of lights looking like the whole world spread out
below us.
Over your shoulder you said, I need this, you said.

I’m down the sunken path with no understanding,
the dark passage of incomprehensible chemistry
and it could be almost greening Spring out there;
bring out the day, let me go.

*

This morning’s darling chorus
a compilation of Glenn Gould’s background humming,
his transponder signals from the Bachosphere
as if there are bearings to be found up there.

From which we can reconstruct the music,
the miracle pouring from his fingers
like the flightpaths of the plural world
ascending into depthless blue.

Over the white track through frosted grass
the flights arrive, wheels down, insignia on show,
sliding along a silver cord from everywhere, 
easy on the pedals for that music, said Captain Glenn.

* 

Avenue Reine Astrid, Kraainem is a long road 
longer than a solo by Neil Young, 
with Spring tipping over the Lego houses 
and the sun warm enough to tempt the birds to sing.

It’s a road as long as hope passing Rue des Tulipes, 
keep to the path, don’t cross against the lights, 
walk boy, talk to Doctor Agneessens, weigh the odds, 
carry them through the flatlands in early Spring.

* 

Rain everywhere a thousand mirrors this morning 
and with 18 musicians it’s crowded on the track, 
we bump along as best we can.

A cello rests for breath in the fork of a tree, 
comes back in and we’re off for Steve Reich racing 
over dark holes in the path showing nothing.

Through the trees of the cemetery, a stage set of skips 
yellow on red Soret Soret, for the disposal of symbolism; 
Oh Soret, little lost thing in the trees, pick up the pace.

* 

In the cool morning my neighbours walk their dogs, 
mist pools around their revolving feet hiding the circuit; 
*Below this level there is none, the operator said* 
and Malcolm Mooney returned to sing the sun up.
I hang from the bar count 90 drop and turn
see the tunnel of light through the swaying trees;
below this level forget the poor soil, the lactic acid burn,
89 90 push the day uphill against katabasis.

*

I walked 100 houses and a fallow field
last lap step-by-step to Centre Medik
to catch corvids blown like rags.

Scant pickings birds, time waits
at the near boundary in falling light,
face like pedantic death.