

SAMPLER

Species of Spaces

Also by Ken Bolton

Poetry

Four Poems
Blonde and French
Christ's Entry into Brussels or Ode to the Three Stooges
Two Sestinas
Talking To You
Blazing Shoes
Notes For Poems
Two Poems—A Drawing of the Sky
Sestina to the Centre of the Brain
Selected Poems
'Untimely Meditations' & other poems
Happy Accidents
August 6th
Three Poems for John Forbes
Europe
At The Flash & At The Baci
Three Poems
The Circus
A Whistled Bit of Bop
Sly Mongoose
Selected Poems 1975–2010
Threefer
London Journal/London Poem
Lonnie's Lament

as editor:

Homage to John Forbes

collaborations (all with John Jenkins)

Airborne Dogs
The Ferrara Poems, a verse novel
The Gutman Variations
The Wallah Group
Nutters Without Fetters
Poems of Relative Unlikelihood
Lucky for Some

Visual Arts

Michelle Nikou monograph
Art Writing—Selected Art Criticism

Ken Bolton

Specimens of Spaces

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& anthologies before. Many thanks to their editors.

‘Dark Heart’ appeared in *Cordite* and *Best Australian Poems 2016*
‘Hard Pressed’, ‘Spot Check’ and ‘Polski Ogorki’ in *Journal of Poetics*
Research; ‘Gilbert Place’ and ‘What Do I Owe Them?’ in *Australian Book*
Review; ‘Tale Of Two Cities’ in *Golden Handcuffs Review*.

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1

In the Moment

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In Three Parts: A Report on the Ongoing Moment

1: Report

We fly out
a few hours late

after a security delay,
that makes the wait
more an adventure

— anxiously perilous —

an enormous
press of people

—all bets off
all planes
delayed

the whole airport

ordered, again,
thru security —

less pissed off
than normally

& separated —
because we
booked our flights
separately.

I don't know
where Cath is sitting
or what she's doing—

well, reading probably

I've read
the first few

of Kurt's artist's books

the young-sounding one

FOR KATE

&

I HAVE

NEVER BEEN TO JAPAN

lighter

less sentimental, canner,

& the suddenly serious

& existential one
on personality,

WE ARE A MOVIE —

funny, but dark,
adult suddenly

And I'm thinking now,
calibrating 'how it went'
the show

that brought us
all together

(again)

& yet
hardly brought me together
with anyone.

But it did:

with Kurt, whom I've never
been closer to, & Denis—

& Laurie (whom
I finally got to
relax with—

on the train away, back to Sydney)

The readings
were not, at least, divisive
tho they probably made
everybody
too nervous to relate much

And we all went
for coffee
when the last was done.

I didn't get
to speak much
to Pam—to Micky
just a little,

#

& Sal was gone.

#

Steve never showed.

I hope
he's alright.

And the books got done

—Kurt's hard work—

that I suppose
the others are
reading now, evaluating.

Are knives coming out?
Probably not.

I had the best time
in the run-up, with Kurt
we laughed & joked

& 'dealt with the gallery'
'dealt with' the media

— readied
(steadied) —

& planned

Then afterwards

cooking, serving up, drinking & laughing,
with Denis,

Arnie, Laurie
& Cath —

#

the mellow team.

#

Arnie rolled
a big spliff.

The plan:
to sell Nick
a list

*of who had purchased
the rare editions*

& a list
'for him alone'—

of who else
had been given that list —

Phew!

We laugh about
Tranter
going off for a drink, looking
to see what's in the
fridge
while the computer composes poems for him

—the Terminals—

sipping a daiquiri
& watching the pool-cleaner
smuggle slowly back & forth

I imagine a large
tadpole-looking shape,

going slowly,
from one end

to the other,

black against the
pale blue of the tiles.

(I've never seen
a pool-cleaner in fact.)

The Erudition model,
manufactured by Clepsydra.

#

And the Bard
from the Bush:

pretending to be
dumber than he is,

an innocent—

wise-foolin'.

— ‘Wise Foolin’ —

(to the tune of
‘Barefootin’)

When will he
drop off the peg?

#

Laurie thinks his
own real work began
around that time,

’79, 80

Tho there are continuities
running right back —

& to *Under The Weather*,
at least —

tho his language

became more spare
from the 80s on

& there is a
sureness

no equivocation
in the face
of others’ doubts

(if not his own)

Pam's work
changed then, too,
& continued to change,

And then there's mine
— my abiding problem.

When does this plane land?

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2: What Is to Be Done?

I have become couth mainly by aping my friends

True?

#

I write to Johnny J

our plans for The Poems

girls go by

—this University (so called)
is an *art* school—

winter clothes in their new

so they suddenly look more
'purposeful'

—than last week

when it was all shorts
& t-shirts

& a lot of off-the-shoulder.

About now the first assignments kick in.

They come in the shop looking determined
or puzzled

or desperate.

I marshal my couth &
help —

suggest ‘the relevant texts’.

I think of sending Ron Padgett a postcard.

Should I?

#

Or a fan letter

I owe him one.

#

“John,” I say,

To return to the problem —

‘the poems’

(so called — ha ha)

are looking ‘good’ (! ?)

#

‘bad’ (?)

#

‘indifferent’ (?)

#

— what *do* I say? In fact,

they *are* okay.

We wrote them one
afternoon

a week or so back

one every fifteen minutes
on average & laughed a lot

(Do we always
'have
the stopwatch out'?

Non.)

amazed how
fast they were going.

Now to fix them.
Tinker, tinker.

John, pass that spanner!

Thirteen,

so we're calling them that,

subtitled

"Lucky for some".

They say that, John says, at Bingo

("One Three—Thirteen: lucky for some.")

'The Poems'

a phrase which always rings the Ted Berrigan bell

& says

The mania of the young poet

Have I put it behind me?
yet?

'really'?

(or)

Am I
THE VERY SPIRIT

of Ted (!) ?

When it comes right down to it, any of those ‘*the-very-X-of ...’s*

always amuse

the spectacle of all those beliefs

I’ve never held—

so French, so ideal, so *German*, so Ted?

But Ted ist Tod, no?

(what language am I talking here?)

“John,” I write,

“Here is what I’ve done.” In response
to a letter of more or less the same from him.

That takes care of *those* poems for a few days.

At work
an email from Pam, an email from Laurie.

My world
closing in

reassuringly.

#

An afternoon,
then home

*