

SAMPLER

a book with no

name

ALSO BY KEN EDWARDS

POETRY

Good Science (Roof Books, 1992)

eight + six (Reality Street, 2003)

Bird Migration in the 21st Century (Spectacular Diseases, 2006)

No Public Language. Selected Poems 1975–1995 (Shearsman, 2006)

Red & Green (Oystercatcher Press, 2009)

Songbook (Shearsman Books, 2009)

Bardo (Knives Forks and Spoons Press, 2011)

PROSE

Futures (Reality Street Editions, 1998; 2nd ed. 2010)

Nostalgia for Unknown Cities (Reality Street, 2007)

Down with Beauty (Reality Street, 2013)

Ken Edwards

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'No such thing as repetition' is my paraphrase
of Gertrude Stein's aesthetic.

'Be' is my gloss on some lines by Laura Riding Jackson.

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for Elaine, as ever

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If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise.

Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

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Beginning

In the beginning there was nothing. And nothing moved nothing was moving. Nothing moved. Nothing was moving it was moving but at first it wasn't going anywhere. Nothing was moving but how? There wasn't anything there to move. How can nothing move? But you could say nothing was moving moving out of nothing it was moving out of nothing into a new space which had come out of nothing. Nothing had been born and there it was. How can nothing be but there it was. It was and is. That is to say it came from something else which was nothing which was before and which was nothing before. It was there and is there and it had come from what was before which was nothing. Before all this there was nothing it wasn't going anywhere because there wasn't anywhere for it to go. That was before and this is after. After is different it is somewhere and it is possible to move to it because there is somewhere for movement to happen and movement can happen there is movement and it moves. Now there is movement. Everything is movement everything fluctuates there is movement everywhere you can say that everything moves it has moved out of nothing. There are fluctuations and there are ripples everything ripples. You can see the ripples but also you are the ripples because the ripples are everything. You are rippling you are moving you are in movement but you don't know where you're moving to because this is all there is so there is nowhere else to move to until you move to it and then it becomes where you have moved to and you can see it it is here and it is you. You are here but you don't know where you've come from you have come from nothing and you don't know nothing you can't imagine nothing even though that's what you have come out of. And you are rippling and moving and the movement is you. And there is movement and fluctuation and the movement is not you or at any rate there is movement which seems not to be you. The sun is moving across the sky and the birds move across the sky and the fish are rippling in the water and the train rumbles along the track and a song comes on the radio and the window rattles and somebody is shouting to a child and there you are you are trying to understand. You are trying to understand are you you how are you you you came out of nothing how are you here? And it becomes even more mysterious.

Dance

When the light comes it all starts. It comes in fits and starts. It comes in colours. When the light comes on they start they come on in colours. They start to move the colours start to move they move more quickly. More and more quickly they move at first in fits and starts and then continuously the colours moving and changing places continuously and continually and it all comes together soon pretty soon it all comes together. The light shows the movement. It moves at the speed of thought and together they all move and move until they reach the speed of thought. They are as one. They are one. They are one and then they are two. They are two and then they are three they move at the speed of thought. The two are black and the three is white. They are three and then they are four they are joined by a fourth and then by a fifth and a sixth. There are six in all. Two are black and three are white and the other one is like the sun. They move and ripple and dance it's a dance the fish are dancing they dance in the water the black and the white and the sunlike one dancing at first in fits and starts and then continuously until they reach the speed of thought they are like thoughts in the way they speed all together the dance is their thinking they think continually they think therefore they dance. This is a thought that they are thinking that they must dance. The three white together and the two black together and the sunlike one alone. Then one of the white goes with one of the black and the second of the white goes with the sunlike one. And the other black goes with the third of the white. And the sunlike one goes with the first white and the second white goes with the third white and the other black goes with the first black. And then the first white with the other black the second white with the first black and the third white with the sunlike one. And so the other black with the second white and sunlike with the first black and the third white with the first white. But the first white goes with the second white and the first black with the third white and sunlike with the other black. And then the third white joins the other two white and the other black joins the first black and sunlike is alone again. That's how it all comes together and falls apart. After that it starts over again but in a different sequence it doesn't repeat. There is never exact repetition. That's how it all

comes together and falls apart continually it's what we call thought it happens at the speed of thought. The fish ripple the water ripples they are moving through the water and the water is moving through them they move through the light and the light moves through them they are the light they seem to move without thought because they are at the speed of thought which is the only constant in the dance which is like a dream which is like a dream of thought which is thinking without end without end in sight at first in fits and starts and fits and starts and then continuously and continually and it seems without end when you think about it.

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Belief

I believe there's something. I believe there's something there. I believe there's something in it. Something in it that is there. There is there. Here is here and there is there. Up there is there and down here is here and that's how it is. I believe in how it is. I believe you can see that. If you can't see it it may be because it isn't there or it may be that it is there and you just can't see it. So you have to believe it. If you can see it it's there and if you can't see it you just have to believe it's there. Something or someone. If there's someone you can talk to them. You have to have someone to talk to. Everybody has to have someone to talk to. If there was no-one you'd be talking to yourself which doesn't make any sense. It wouldn't make any sense at all. So you see there must be someone. Someone is talking someone must be listening. Talking is happening which is the movement of sound waves in the air which is the lips moving you can see the lips moving. Because of the light waves because there is the light. Where do the light and sound waves come from they don't come out of nothing. They are all the same thing. The thing is that if it came out of nothing it wouldn't make any sense and it does make sense. So it is a thing and it exists and it will go on existing and they say nothing lasts forever so they say one day it won't exist any more but where will it go then? Where will the thing go that has existed? It has to go somewhere. And if it is somewhere it's there. Will it come back or will it be another thing? It's a question of whether you believe what they say. What will the new thing be will it be the same as the old thing and if it is the same will it actually then be the old thing or as good as? It has to make some kind of sense because the talking continues and if it didn't make any sense then there wouldn't be any point in the talking or the writing or the telling but there is a point because it continues the sound patterns and the lips and the fingers moving and people seem to understand it. So there's something in it. That's what it comes down to and it doesn't finish just because they say nothing lasts forever. What do they know anyway? That's what it comes down to. There's got to be something in it. That's how it is. I mean it makes sense.

Nowhere

You what? You saw what? You don't know what. You're talking. You're just talking. You're talking and you're talking. You don't know what you're talking about. You're talking about what you saw. What did you see? They say what you see is what you get. So is what you get what you see? If you see it you've got it or else you've got to get it. Is that it? Have you got that? Where were you? Where are you now? You don't get it. Can't you see? Is what you get what you see or else is what you see what you get? Is that what you're saying? You say you have been there. Where is that? You've seen it. You have just been there. You've been talking about it for all this time. You've talked about it and now you have been. You talked and talked about it and now you have been there. You have been and you've talked about it but you don't get it. You still don't get it. You have been where you were going and you got to do that. After all this time at least you got to do that. And it wasn't much. You got to do that and it wasn't much not at all. You got there finally. It wasn't much to write home about. You were talking about it but it wasn't much in the end to write home about. So you came home? Did you come home? What did you see? There wasn't much there. There wasn't much to see. But now you've been there. At least you've been there. Now you can talk about it. After all this time you can talk about it. After all this time. What was it like? It was much like anywhere else. Was it worth going or wasn't it? It was nowhere much. It was nowhere. What will you do about it now? You don't know what you'll do. Did you really get there? How did you get there? Was it really there? Where? There wasn't any there. Was there? It was there and then it wasn't there any more. At least it would have been an experience. Did you come back? Or are you still there? Was it an experience? You still have the experience you see if it was an experience. You see? You say you didn't come back. You went there but you didn't come back so you're still there. You must still be there. How will you get back? How will you get back home? Where is that? Can you see? Can you talk about it? Why talk about it no point in talking about it. No point at all. It's just there. It's nowhere. It's nowhere much. You got nowhere. But at least you can call it home. You can call it home even if it isn't home. You can talk about it and call it home. You

went there and back. No you didn't you went there and you never came back. Where is back? Nowhere. Where is home? Home is nowhere. You didn't come back so you're still there but you're here. You're still here. You're here not there. But you got to talk about it even though you don't know what you're talking about. It's all about where you went and where you got to and how you got there and whether you came back it's not clear. Where you went is nowhere. Where it was is not clear. You went nowhere. Now where are you going? Now you're still going nowhere. You're going nowhere and you're talking about it. You see? You think you don't know where you are but you're right there. Or in other words you're right here. You're talking about here in other words. That's right. You're right here in the middle of it. You're right in the middle that's where you are. In other words you were right in the middle all this time and you're still there. It's nowhere. This is where you are. It's nowhere and you're right in the middle of it.

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Nobody there

Is anybody there? Is anybody there? Is there anybody there? There's nobody there. Is anybody there? No there's nobody. Nobody there. There must be somebody. There must be somebody there. Is there anybody? No there's nobody there. There's nobody. That can't be right. There must be somebody. Somebody must be there. Is there? There must be. There must be somebody there. It can't be right that there's nobody there. Is anybody there? What's the matter? Is there nobody there? There used to be somebody there. Now there's nobody. There's nobody there that's what the matter is. There was always somebody there. Was there? Was there always somebody? There may have been somebody but now there's nobody. Something must be the matter there's nobody there now. Somebody used to be there. There was somebody. There always used to be somebody. Somebody was always there. Somebody was there and nothing was the matter. Nothing used to be the matter. Nothing was the matter when there was somebody there but now nobody is there so something must be the matter. Something must be the matter because there's nobody there. What is the matter now? Is somebody there now no there's nobody there. There used to be somebody. Now there's nobody. Nobody's there but somebody used to be. Something must be the matter. Is anything the matter? What is the matter? What is the matter something must be the matter. It seems there's nobody there that is what seems to be the matter. That can't be right. Somebody must be there.

Infinity

There's a room and then there's a little room and another little room off that. And then a room and a room and more rooms and then a room. And beyond that is a little room and then a large room and a room. And in through there there's another and beyond another and a room beyond. And from here they go into another room and that's the little room right there. And then the main room. The room where it happens and the room where they prepare for it to happen and the room where they go after. Then there's a room off that and a room off that and off that and off that and off that. That's where it all goes on where they go that's the room or if not the room then the room beyond that that's where it all happens and after it happens there's another room where they go. And they all gather in that room and they talk and remark upon the room whether it's a good room or not and they remember another room was that as good a room as the room that is the room they're in or wasn't it perhaps it wasn't or perhaps it was another room they were thinking of. Perhaps they mistook that room for that room. That's the room they go into and that's the room they don't. The room they don't is still there it's locked you can't get in there unless you get a key but to do that you have to visit another room and another room and then beyond is the room where you get the key but then you have to find your way back through the first room and the second room and the third room and the fourth room so it may not be worth it. It may not be worth entering the room because there are other rooms that are just as good just as worth entering where you can do what you need to do where you can spend as much time as you like. And when you've finished you can go into the next room that's what they do go into the next room and gather there before going into the room beyond. And the room you go into before the room in which whatever happens happens is called the green room and the room you go into after is called the white room so you can easily identify it and not confuse it with the red room the blue room the yellow room the black room or the room of many colours. But the room of many colours leads into the black room and that leads to the yellow room which leads to the blue room which leads to the red room which leads to the white room and then you're back in

the green room. That's where everybody goes. They go into that room and they stay there for a while and if you ask for the toilet they tell you it's beyond the next room just go left and left again and that room is the toilet and you can go to the toilet. That little room is the toilet. You can go there. Everybody goes there. And off the toilet is another toilet and then another toilet and so there are plenty of toilets in fact an infinite number of toilets so they estimate everybody can go to the toilet and everybody does. And everybody goes. Everybody is going. And when you've finished don't forget to wash your hands and then you can join everybody in the next room which is the room everybody goes to. You go right and right again to reach that room. You can't miss it. It's quite a large room. And inside that room is another room and within that an inner room which nobody really knows about but is a room that has been rumoured. The rumours spread all around the room and spill over into the adjoining rooms and then the rooms beyond that where everybody has gathered. That's where the rumours go and they go on forever. That room is locked. Is it the same room or a completely different one? Nobody can say. Nobody knows what's happening in that room but they wait in the rooms where they are or where they are urged to gather and pass the time talking and waiting until further notice for further information.