Also by Kit Fryatt

turn push / turn pull
Rain Down Can
The Co. Durham Miner’s Granddaughter’s Farewell
to the Harlan County Miner’s Grandson.
Kit Fryatt

Bodyservant

Shearsman Books
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Glitter is a Gender, eds Sarah Crewe and Sophie Mayer
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Centrifugal: Contemporary Poetry of Guadalajara and Dublin
ed. Christodoulos Makris and Ángel Ortuño
(EBL-Cielo Abierto / Conaculta, 2014).

Birdbook III, eds Kirsten Irving and Jon Stone (Sidekick Books, 2015)

And in these journals:
Penduline, Dusie, Icarus, Translation Ireland, ESCPoetry.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bodyservant</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bülbülüüm altın kafeste</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem beginning with a line by Patrick Califia</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splice</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on the warren, in the lee of the firs</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tardy steps her silent main</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hermit and the crow</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulminate</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saffron Laudanum</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Mine owne Ned Poins’</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hero</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOU</td>
<td>OUI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pros of the Transsiberian &amp; little Flint of the Ronson</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
bodyservant

I sleep at the foot of the stair
the rough nights
of the bed
I know his sleeping breath and its feint
perhaps he knows mine

his lungs are congested
he is close to sixty
and I am past
this year
the middle of life

the fair hair he cut
the night before we started
a four years’ pelt
for Cairo
that would not shame the Magdalen
is gone as he said
a stringy tonsure
it would be

when an attack wakes him I bring milk & ale
we have both killed men that
he might live to this pass

their grey shades stand between us
so he seems
insubstantial

he suffers as tall men do worst with his knees
his back
in the mornings he is agile like an anvil
as the mounting block he refuses

he and his wife had eleven children
and some of them live
far away
he misses

her hand beneath his head

he says
to put my hand under his head

would be worth the ransom of the son of the king of Cairo

but I've never been lucky

there was a lady

the guest of many important men

he visited her when she stayed with them

then I watched till dawn

I knew her name but never her face

she was a grey shape in thought

like a place where a painter meant
to fill in one of the three Marys

a grey form lying on

the body I know better than my own

its scar furrows

turn and turn about

the body to which I attribute

every scar on my own

lying on a grey form

until I called out

my fine friend

here comes the dawn

chief glory

glorious lord

here comes the
dawn
Bülbülüüm altın kafeste

The prescription is a reed pipe and a concertina in my pocket, I shred bus tickets too, paper doilies, all the roses this year were dipped in glitter, glue first, the singer’s voice fills my headphones with Turkish, the empty jute shopper at my calf has ladybirds on it, must be funny if your job is dipping Valentine roses in glue (peculiar), it was supposed to be Atatürk’s favourite song, but I’d say he just said the first thing that came into his head, like ‘the small town of no importance’ he made his capital. I have to say one thing this Primark spring range makes modest dress affordable for once, yay, the lamps they use to set gel nails might be carcinogenic, I take out my Galaxy phone in its indigo rubber skin and think of false nails prodding touchscreens, crusty with jewels, these are my friends, but I don’t change the song, which is sad, check messages or want to go for coffee and cake. Two kids on BMXs get in my way he hisses back at his sister, she says a gaping sorry and so does he, I smile and say it’s all right, I must’ve been looking stern, the song is so sad it’s a cliché, but even naïve art is chock full (especially) of meta (my love is sick, don’t sing) further up the hill the children pass me she slouches in the saddle, he stands up to shout a dare, she hares ahead their estate tilts, the sky is violet night
the riders of the twilight of this world
sport pennants, decals and spokesters,
alto burrs. The little strip mall is a bizarre
caravanserai. Women's voices break
and they have Adam's apples in fact
the nightingale jars out of a place
railed around and hedged in. It is
goserelin, which looks to me like a Turkish
word—I wonder what the pharmacist
thinks—
I find

I’m on my way to you, tutelar
shabby and locked, if there’s single malt
in your nostrils you don’t need it
in your mouth

last time I got laid
someone else’s bacon was frying
up the stair combined
with spermicide it smelled like olives
steeping in brine

I would say Turkey
but others would say Greece
and be no less wrong. One day this whole
mentor/pupil thing will have to end
in the sack

or throwing delft
but not yet, my good sweet
honey lord, not yet. I want to be
your rawboned hauflin loon
so we can be

Davy and Alan
staging a bit of hurt/comfort to cadge
a boat, I want to shuck you like an eel,
box you like a hare, put you in my mouth
like a Jew’s harp

I can turn meat to fruit
call it a superpower. You’ve been
my Hays Code through most of *Twentieth Century*, one boat-long foot
on the floor at all times

but in the middle of the bed
the river runs deep, you’ve managed to
raincheck joy compleat once again forever
I am a narroweyed freightjumping
Appalachian urchin
with tattooed knuckles
a knackered paperback of *A Good Man
Is Hard To Find and Other Stories*
splayed open on my shoulder
bleeding
into my panties
as kids have done since before
there were panties and I am riding riding
riding riding riding this boxcar away
from you, tutelar.