

SAMPLER

*no particular place to go*

Also by Laurie Duggan

*Poetry*

East: Poems 1970–74 (1976)  
[East and Under the Weather (2014)]  
Under the Weather (1978)  
Adventures in Paradise (1982, 1991)  
The Great Divide, Poems 1973–83 (1985)  
The Ash Range (1987; 2nd edition, 2005\*)  
The Epigrams of Martial (1989)  
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Compared to What: Selected Poems 1971–2003 (2005)\*  
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The Epigrams of Martial (2010)  
The Collected Blue Hills (2011)  
The Pursuit of Happiness (2012)\*  
Allotments (2014)\*

*Cultural history*

Ghost Nation (2001)

\*Shearsman titles

Laurie Duggan

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## Readers

*for Tony Frazer*

André Kertész photographed them  
hunched over a paper,

seen from above on a rooftop  
or below on a fire escape,

shadowed in a park,  
or lit up on a bench

knees holding a book,  
a cow over this one's shoulder

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# Afterimages

Peter Lanyon

those quadrilaterals,  
hedges, a landing strip  
seen through cross-hairs

that line, a strut or cliff edge  
a sudden dip or buffet  
a broad slash of blue

landscape, suggested once by a Claude glass  
might be just this ... this ... this,  
like ornithology: 'for the birds'

\*

Frank Auerbach

down Primrose Hill  
two lights, feeble in middle ground,  
hemmed in by shrubbery

orange visibility vests on a lime coloured oval  
a street wet behind glass  
pedestrians lit by the glow of phones

the open cigarette packet on the pub table  
is a strategy, pencil backwards  
on the interlocutor's ear

dusty window panes  
haloed by sunlight  
bright squares on a bar floor

\*

## Alexander Calder

ballet shoes point upward  
a slight figure, lifted

by a thickset one  
the weight of both

an absence, suggested  
by continuous line

so the testes become a leg  
an elbow becomes a signature

the space enclosed  
animate;

across the aisle  
Josephine Baker

dances, her shadow  
lifeless on the wall

\*

## Gustave Courbet

The cliffs of Ornans appear  
as they do through the gallery window,

the local characters enlarged, a bourgeois presumption  
to be bigger than Napoleon (a short man),

to inhabit a large canvas, as though  
worthy of the academy.

What made him present himself, greeted on the road  
by another figure (engaged perhaps

in mere commerce) offer instead of an epiphany  
a commonplace?

\*

## Jacopo Bassano

Light breaks (or fades) over a distant mountain  
but the figures in the foreground are too intent

to notice, animals martialled up a ramp in pairs,  
eggs collected in a basket. The humans

bundle possessions, sort copper pans, have  
no time to view even the rising water.

To the left a monkey holds what looks like  
a sceptre – has all sense deserted these people

alive in the cramped space of a jigsaw? All questions  
seem to have an answer in this world

but where is the cat's companion?

\*

## Basil King

The face could be  
lunar, its craters

the glint of an eye,  
bend sinister of the mouth;

half is in eclipse,  
an orange shadow,

the other half glances out  
at invisible events;

history maybe, or  
just a present

occurring somewhere  
behind you;

a glow, or  
halo surrounds it

\*

## Mona Hatoum

Domesticities (bedframes, toys)  
wired up and lethal,

nothing's for certain:  
a cheese-grater divides a room;

light through  
a wire cage casts

shadows, induces vertigo;  
a propeller,

one blade furrowed,  
the other straight,

makes a pattern  
in sand, then erases it

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## Six works

1

are these fields  
or a flatbed art  
hemmed by mountains

these scatterings a sky  
or a world above this one

a golden sunrise  
a kneeling figure

ravines and temples  
in clouds or speckled pain

2

a monstrous bird  
on its side, beak  
parting the black  
collapsed caryatid  
oblivious passer-by

3

the side of a silo  
overcome by vegetation

4

an eye  
or moon  
in blue night

5

snow-melt  
in the pastel's  
upper corner

6

oil scraped off a landscape  
the hill that fell off a wall

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# Hearsay

this office  
this ventilator

‘snipped into grabs’

piano bridge creek

peculiar atomism  
lukewarm review

entrepôt  
a knee itch

all that white  
surrounds us

a fragile painting  
without border

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# Toys

1

a doll's house  
doors at the back  
no apparent connection  
between rooms  
papered distinctively  
small details, a bath,  
a coal scuttle, figures  
intent on their own activity  
oblivious to each other  
a collapsed wall  
renders them public

2

a clockwork train  
runs in a circle  
between nowhere and nowhere else

3

a bear, a mouse and a bent dog  
buried in a trunk  
enter and leave the world as pathos

# Hegemony

a world of transactions  
at war with a world of immanence,  
a geography without contours  
against a range of singular spaces

a speech of sorts  
lacks consequence, tied  
to its own systole, diastole,  
the rumble of traffic as contrabass

as though a carpet  
were rolled up the neat lines  
of buildings biographies  
lurch to conclusion.

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