no particular place to go
Also by Laurie Duggan

Poetry

[East and Under the Weather (2014)]
Under the Weather (1978)
The Epigrams of Martial (1989)
Blue Notes (1990)
The Home Paddock (1991)
Memorials (1996)
Mangroves (2003)
The Passenger (2006)
Crab & Winkle (2009)*
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
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 epithet
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
Six works

1

are these fields
or a flatbed art
hemmed by mountains

des 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
an eye
or moon
in blue night

snow-melt
in the pastel's
upper corner

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