

**LISA SAMUELS**

Also by Lisa Samuels

*LETTERS*, Meow Press 1996

*The Seven Voices*, O Books, 1998

*War Holdings*, Pavement Saw Press 2003

# **Paradise for Everyone**

**Lisa Samuels**

**Shearsman Books  
Exeter**

Published in the United Kingdom in 2005 by  
Shearsman Books Ltd  
58 Velwell Road  
Exeter EX4 4LD

[www.shearsman.com](http://www.shearsman.com)

ISBN 0-907562-67-1

Copyright © Lisa Samuels, 2005.

The right of Lisa Samuels to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act of 1988. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

The image on the cover is *Untitled*, 1973 (chromogenic development print, 69.22 cm x 67.31 cm) by Gerhard Richter, reproduced by permission of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Accession number 90.272. Accessions Committee Fund: gift of Frances and John Bowes, and Mr and Mrs Donald G. Fisher, Mimi and Peter Haas, and Elaine McKeon. Copyright © Gerhard Richter.

The author photograph on the rear cover is by Dick Blau.

### Acknowledgments

Some of these poems have appeared in the following: *26*, *Above/ground Press Broadsheet #186*, *The Alterran Poetry Assemblage*, *Antenym*, *Aufgabe*, *Court Green*, *Crayon*, *The Cream City Review*, *Delmar*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Five Fingers Review*, *The Germ*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Jacket*, *Kenning*, *New American Writing*, *New Zoo Poetry Review*, *Talisman*, *Traverse*, and *West Coast Line*. My heartfelt thanks to all the editors.

# Contents

## Complete Meaning

Complete meaning	9
The operator in question	10
Concavity is imperceptible in the dark	11
The rager, the constructor, and the sacrificer	13
The tournament of daybreak	14
Nun walking naked out of the ahead of time, and what she is thinking	15
Upwind	19

## Provide, provide

Something for you	23
A suitable expression	24
Riddle poem	26
Glasnost	27
The year collapses (an experiential screenplay)	29
Charity	32
Connubial bliss	33

## Protection's daughter

Historical girl	37
A light less dreamed (play for creatures)	38
Honest and true	39
The host of questions	42
Progress	43
In which "resistance" is the operative absence	44
Encomium	46
Latitude (Longitude)	47
The garden of love	48

## Cloak and veil

Iconoclastic relationship to suffering	50
Shock	53
Audessusdezéro	54
After the accident	55
The end of distance	59
Target Practice	60

## Attest

“The real suffering of another”	65
Under the accountability tree	66
The dog of the infinite	68
The blue sky above	69
Convince me	70
Mode of transport	72
The rack of consent	73

## Fingertips upon the mouth, at last

The doctrine of equivalents	79
Come as you are	80
Take over	82
An American classic	83
My theme has a poem	86
The house we used to live in	88
The fruits of conviction	92

## **Complete meaning**





## Complete meaning

The dragon on my shoulder is hungry again  
he watches precisely for the velvet innuendo  
that displays him, scent creeping closely  
to the torso, room for encouragement –  
I see the cloak you draped over the opening  
and windows falling forward by degrees,  
when emptiness finds constancy and drinks it  
deeply down the mouth, forward by the teeth  
swishing avariciously like gargoyles –  
he eats those too, and sweeps  
his baleful eyesight back and toward you,  
while you keep walking closer to the moment  
he'll chomp you with his customary fires  
my sweet acanthine carnivore of hours.

## The operator in question

Start with a lapsarian protector, beaten by the brow-born illness.  
Insults are the best ones, rigged backward. The jaws of spring are  
melancholic, doomed.

This shoe fits both my feet. You managed only to make it unendurable.  
Detecting illness requires constitutive vision, listing in reverse, the  
order of light underneath us, the mold worn properly across the breast,  
like that. I want to take everything off.

In the garden of longing I found you, bent and leaning. You were  
grateful and sang a hymn like this:

“Te de, te di, inlying,  
inscrutable neurons of is.  
You met, you force, belying  
a manner of probably touch.”

It was never a tool or an instrument, the hills came and took over. Do  
you want to inculcate a steadiness? The scene is far away and the frame  
is broken. More acted upon than acting.

Every part of it is alive, scrawls and mangles. Nor questioning what  
particular light will turn on the board, the vex, curled and ruminate for  
flight. It opens up the skin, belies brown and mutable table tops, on  
which we put the plan for this day and try to guess the names for the  
next.

I took that garden and folded it up. The earth tore and inebriated itself.  
That was a gesture.

## Concavity is imperceptible in the dark

intervals of discretion pile up  
and she makes pies of them  
for when the strong dilution pours  
and he will not

leaning over the towers, she made a face  
and making forced

split giddy in the halters, a hearse of proof

and his square leaning through the pent-up roof

lithe monstrosity, many-forked positions  
dictate with the sound

a priori delirium, what waggish innocents

found underneath their beds, the dirt  
of simpering particularity

a story: fit within the sides, she squirmed,  
his almighty grooming rented out,  
she declared the ruses inappropriate

ending porous rounded-off invasions

you mustn't imagine

something grows

pre-existence is a leash, it holds the dog under the chin

such frightful pliant tongue-screws set  
on the plays of tête à tête

indulgences are those

necessities are these

advancement makes a portrait of the throat, bent backwards  
to affix to this important involution a new key, played  
clannish on your ordinary back

this ruse is breath, what though it be  
a farfetched redolent of

modish parts, extraordinary lush growth  
charted from front to

the scene is not a picture, oaken  
named, ashen and again

passing by faces

gambit explained as operable

I find that

## The rager, the constructor, and the sacrificer

When I go to sleep your conscience talks to me: “wake up!” it cries,  
“I have something to tell you!” But when I open my eyes I am always  
in that same house, or variations of it: one is set up on a hill,  
not known for the grey of its marbled interior, with all the stairwells,  
staircases, stairs, vaunting down and upward, circling around,  
with always another room beyond. “Do you recognize this one?”  
built sideways on the slope of ground around it, flat as a rupture,  
only more square, and this one funnels inward to a kitchen or  
a function-place, where tightness circles around itself and I am  
inside sitting and outside on my way in towards myself.  
The waiting. You wouldn’t think there was anything in it.  
Yours is the creative imagination, constructing the way to see  
this further place and the wakeful aspect fumes. Meanwhile,  
above ground, I can see the usefulness of playing out each hour for  
someone else. Instead of mauling certitude with importunate gestures.  
The circumference of the angle is miscalculated because you haven’t  
taken error into account. Or any roundabout reaching that  
you wish for. It is impossible to be clear about something that is not.  
There’s no reason for you to reckon any of this into the final lading:  
when I took your hand it felt like water, and this last gesture is free.  
Stable marks are left-hand-sided, the way I turn  
toward sleeping in your stead.

## The tournament of daybreak

As though secretive, your hair untied  
and spun around you like arrested molecules

the tanking earth unyields itself like that  
to be in conquest is not, those are seeds of flesh  
not escaping nor wanting “the dropping hair

the light-struck eyes full of questioning”  
that’s a reason to address the issue, waiting for you  
here as though forensics were a beginning

I speak to you my love wrestling the page  
everything requires muscle like thought is grit  
we tell it quick-deep with the slice of eyes

never escaping the designated parts  
of your life: one at a time, wheel the elocutions in  
and let us look at them once and for all

Nun walking naked out of the ahead of time,  
and what she is thinking

The number of fingers needed as fast as possible  
the kisses of your mouth sent agonized into the thought-wheel  
your hands spun off from the moving car  
the spin of the stars sent straight into eyesight  
the delirious effect of repetition  
canonical manifestations urge through every moment  
I have to ask forgiveness for them  
forgive me for the despairing impulses I put you to  
in order to find from pressure the refinement of nothing  
you are pushing me around, and I loathe  
every opportunity for evasion  
why is it always one or two or three or four, and then  
seven and ten and twelve and maybe even sixteen and then  
it must be twenty then increments of five take over  
like the socks that keep your feet in bondage  
rationality is after-the-fact  
to make something that doesn't matter against the desire  
for matter  
requires you to be as empty as the tools  
(I never saw her in that posture  
but he, many times)

there is no through to get through  
the city is as miraculous as the ignorance you say I have  
there are collections here in the pockets  
you don't see  
I was busy making the background as complex as possible  
you were drunk with unconscious repetitions  
I didn't know the outcome, but I knew the effect  
you didn't see the effect  
my way is preferable: though the hands are empty  
at the end, they are easier to see  
you are not you, though you seem so to yourself  
pushing me away when the walls come too close  
I will push you away when the door is larger  
and you fit through it, no through but it  
there is no such thing as chaos, there are only variable  
descriptions of effects on known conditions  
you come screaming up the stairs, knife in hand,  
and instantly you are a memory, unreal in the instant,  
unsatisfiable  
you play some instrument as I walk through the metal door  
and I see your eyes like cups of weak molasses  
they stick to me  
it is memory to escape from and to only the present  
which is coming and nothing like



liquid freezing up into hope and honesty and self-compassion  
all the attributes that one escapes by dying before dying  
there is such an effort to be made to make the body  
something in front of itself  
I am walking from the cloister with a constant sense  
that the wind behind me follows  
the unwholesome diction chosen by the forecast  
sticking to the skin, the scenes of distasteful passion  
myriad bouts of dust and swirling erudition  
cloaking the impenetrable stones, the white sucked-out  
bones of forgiveness piled up inside the cages  
of your serene and prematurely cored self  
what I put on even as the cloth shudders  
between the revisionary me  
and the awful permanent creation of you  
there is no way to put it sufficient  
to address the cloying majesty that surrounds  
and makes a mass of similarity from  
the lovely sickened purity of impending desecration,  
you put shore-like on the ends of the idea  
and me walking fabulously out from the liquid  
rise up and make it as keen an exit as wounds  
licked bloodily, the body like the church  
like the tree, the building fitted airlessly into the bags

of breathing, you can see the air sucked out of her  
and vacuum made  
her legs grow weak from loss  
but so deliciously she keeps on walking, and the trickle  
of white grows larger, the possibility of leaving  
off maniple and cincture matched  
the one who felt  
and feeling for her made the possibility of feeling  
turn away, what he remembers holds him how the dark  
clank and stank made numerous procreations come out  
cleaner than the promise might expect  
the draining of her fluids  
is the slowest seepage kinder eyes can find, looking  
everywhere for the other one that walks she walks  
with vicious indifference  
burning away the skin that lies  
around her, no better, no more sighted than he finds himself  
upended on the popular style, unable to mark out  
whether it makes him better or reviled  
though no one knows the insurrection promised him  
(she thinks) and here's the dress I wore in previous  
transitions, why don't I try it on again and see  
what dry dimensions are carved out for me

## Upwind

animal pause  
the sally paths

unquiet lope  
we all should have

a soothing urge  
a dining win

the hands taut  
round the shape

we're in