I Islander

SAMPLER
Also by Lynn Davidson

Poetry

*Common Land* (Victoria University Press, 2012)
*How to live by the sea* (Victoria University Press, 2009)
*Tender* (Steele Roberts Publishers, 2006)
*Mary Shelley’s Window* (Pemmican Press, 1999)

Prose

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*For Elliot and Tamara, with love.*
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SAMPLER
My stair

Between the sea and my window
the bus depot where
late at night, double decker buses all
empty and delicate and full of light
glide in, pausing over concrete gullies
where little arms reach up to touch
their underneaths where movement starts.
My father’s heart is failing, he fills up

with fluid (like an empty bus fills up with light?)
I look for flights.
I live on the second floor of the stair.
More Gunn Furness Gray. I am

a lodger here, where buses lightly lumber
into the yellow depot
like bubbles back
into solution.
Leaving Bass Rock gannet colony

After skypointing to show
it’s ready

after one last dive, shorting the sea
(the crack, the pressured current fizzing)

after one last moment of great aloneness: a fleck
in oceans

after the last fish in its gut –
the fin and skin and bone of it – tears apart

it takes a final flight, blowing
Bass Rock into the feathery pieces we call

aura or
atoms we called

father or
Adam
Ancient light

makes the space in which vision is possible.

Ancient light

inscribed on the side of a house gives warning against the obstruction of light.

Ancient light

finds the opening in the wall for the admission of light.

Ancient light

from the first voyage, the first great aloneness, falls in shaking ribbons on the cars.

In their light

we call our hunting and foraging mothers and fathers our first ancients, our dear ones, in from the hills. Back from the sea.
Our first ancients were islands.  
We were their first children.

They built us 
here.

The tall thigh bone 
– the I beam

the eye socket 
– the lacuna for light

the small cavity near the thigh bone 
– also the place for light.

Lacklander 
is the word

for those who don’t have land.

We don’t have land.  
We have the sea.

We islands with our spaces 
for the lakes and the rivers.
Eye

Salty lagoon
separated from the sea by bone.

Latitude and longitude dangle thin feet
in your brackish water.
The word

after Dinah Hawken

Still, and after all this

we call light
light.

And especially when it goes out,
we call it.

Light.
Even though it’s not the beginning of the world anymore

Ancient light still comes lapping in from space
Making a place in which vision is possible

An opening in the wall for the admission of light
An opening in the wail for the admission of light
An opening in the wall for the obstruction of fear

In which an opening
You can hardly bear to

Gannets nest in there
And paint the dark walls