

*Humming*

## **Also by Maurice Scully**

### **Poetry**

*Love Poems and Others* (Raven Arts Press, 1981)

*5 Freedoms of Movement* (Gallop Dog Press, 1987)

*Prior* (Staple Diet, 1991; tel-let, 1992)

*Certain Pages* (Form Books, 1992)

*Over and Through* (Poetical Histories, 1992)

*The Basic Colours* (Pig Press, 1994)

*Priority* (Writers Forum, 1995)

*Prelude, Interlude and Postlude* (all Wild Honey Press, 1997)

*Steps* (Reality Street Editions, 1998)

*Etruscan Reader IV*

(with Bob Cobbing & Carlyle Reedy: etruscan books, 1996, 1999)

*5 Freedoms of Movement* (revised edition, etruscan books, 2001)

*Tree with Eggs* (hardPressed poetry, 2004)

*Livelihood* (Wild Honey Press, 2004)

*Numbers* (Coracle Press, 2006)

*Sonata* (Reality Street Editions, 2006)

*Tig* (Shearsman Books, 2006)

*Doing the Same in English* (Dedalus Press, 2008)

*Work* (Oystercatcher Press, 2008)

*Five Dances* (echapbook, Ahadada Books, 2009)

### **CD**

*Mouthpuller* (Wild Honey Press/Coelacanth Press, 2000)

### **Children's**

*What Is The Cat Looking At?* (Faber, 1995)

# Humming

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**HUMMING**  
**[the words]**





**Song**



## SONNET SONG

Look: if the coin had landed on its edge making the  
spaces to heads and tails the space of all probability  
patterns lit up to date stretched to an evanescent blur  
(one little thought experiment deserves another)  
then *you* this, *me* that – *plink!*

(knock)

If – rock of constancy, rubble of contingency –  
(pass the salt) giving the bracket its due, its  
space, its elastic content, bustle & itch  
(where's my sandwich?) ah on the plate. *Pop!* It's gone.

(knock)

If you dedicate your little book to Mammy and get  
a prize – size matters – you know how it is –  
a million years of isolation and neglect ... as if you  
deserve pampering *as by right*. Just write, right?

(knock)

If a strange-looking fly walks across your page  
in quick, short bursts, stops, grooms its back legs  
thoroughly, you could say: with care, in this un-  
believable world: look. At the evidence of literature,  
the evidence of art and capital. The evidence of the  
evidence.

(knock-knock)

If the Way of Art is a Hard, Hard Way  
as you heard some old Tin-Can say (dot)  
loud sing cuckoo – grows seed – blows mead  
and blossoms the wood now –

If.

If.

If ...

Sing Cuckoo!

[the letter *contend*  
the letter *ablaze*]

If ...

Put *that* on paper.

Laugh. Empty. Good grief.

Is it?

*Knock*

Youbet.

Thanks.

Yep.

OK.

Right.

Seeya.

*Knock-knock*

Ah yes, you're in an altered state.

But listen: so what? Who cares?

Where's my breakfast.

At 53: tickle me.

Food, fun, money, regularity.

*Knock-knock*

*Knock-knock*

*Knock-knock*

Now yr feet are on the ground. Now one foot,  
now the other. The ground. The grass. Yr –  
as yet undecorated – bones.

Over yr moving shadow – first this, then that –  
little butterflies lift & flit – clocks circling –

*what the heck – I wanted love – you  
wanted sex – tra-la cut the deck –  
yr fingers tremble – over what they –  
may resemble – in their future – (of  
bliss) tra-la – you know how it is  
tra-la – tick-tick but what the heck –*

who's there?

circles circling circuits. Circles circling – take  
yr pencil & make that call tick-tick  
there's work to do.

. .

Then a stray piece turned up called  
THE DOG.

## **THE DOG**

The dog is barking in the laneway again.  
Who owns that dog? Do you?  
Do you?

## SONG

Brick glistens a little where a  
snail recently slid. Split. Sun  
through a dusty shed window  
under a tree: as yr pen-tip tou  
ches paper a long thin shadow  
shadows it to the right. Write  
that. Tell it. So. Tapping a  
tempo on an upturned bucket as  
the village kids danced, screeched  
with laughter at this mad whiteman,  
a crack of lightning of a sudden,  
slapped to the east, tacked then  
to the south, thunder echoing,  
and a black sky – //flash// – wells.

We stop: the rains had come. Happiness  
by time over light equals money minus  
dark over hope plus n: honeycomb  
of a beginning of an idea of a next  
move. Whirr of wings, look up: *I*  
have (precisely what you need  
elsewhere) the bright black eye  
of the robin, sideways, checking,  
surrounded by, steeped in, silence.  
Your move. (Art's lateral, even if  
life's tiny – see?) Bottom half,  
13 Across. You open yr glasses case,  
place it to yr left on the desk, *tock*,  
polish the lenses, put them on, begin.

Who's there?

A rain so light, a  
little whisper, leaf-  
brush, merest whis-  
per, how say it,

20 years

light flickers,  
a carpenter's  
hammering, a  
van's reversing

bleep. Dot. The wind  
moves.

Push.

Rippling across  
the desert as  
ripples on the  
sea-floor

sand blown by  
the wind up the  
dune's slope  
to crest

vivid at the lip  
slips with nothing  
to bind it  
down the steep

face in a  
continuous series  
of tiny

avalanches  
inching forward –  
a stealthy animal! –  
across the plain.

Out on the blank  
moving across the blank  
in a blank    put hinge in    3 Down/5 Across  
step one/step two    a gate bangs in the wind  
a drill fixing a windowframe    *is is is*  
the wind in the trees    a breath    a  
breathing & creaking    oh listen    a  
saw!

Teach is *teach* in Irish  
& Irish is an adjective (too) in English  
in whose house the messenger  
arrives to say: (drop)  
it's summer: wake up.  
Flood cells with brood-food  
or lose all larvae *now!*  
The messenger is here. A dish of syrup.  
*Múin é. Nó í.*

Look at that!  
A Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater. One Down. Three

Across.  
Begin.

This just won't do. The First-Surface layer  
(op cit) carries the lies we're used to.  
Massed beds stitched with precision. Burn.  
The second-surface layer we get to know.  
Burn. A third-surface I infer. Burn!  
The fourth & so on down – dig, burn, dig –  
signals that buckle their receptors. How does  
that one go, the one about The Simple Life?  
Hephaestus Was Here. A feathered arc of water  
on the glass. Spaces, joins, wax-dabs in place,  
as-if as-if, just so. Turn that shaggin thing  
off [turning sharp left at page nine yr right



hand rubs down the smooth spine in a light  
automatic gesture:  
change gear &]  
hum numbers to edge out  
the impossible, but don't forget: you're next.  
Goodnight.