Notebook of Signs

## Also by M T C Cronin

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# M.T.C. Cronin 

# Notebook of Signs <br> \& 3 other small books 

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## Notes

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## Contents

## Notebook of Signs

Signs of a Time ..... II
The Three-Week Goat ..... I2
The Fragment Called Wisdom ..... 13
The Swimming Pool is Broken ..... 14
Possible Cures for Beauty ..... 15
One Feather, One Stone ..... 16
Blue Lines ..... 17
The Three-Dimensional Bush-Nest ..... 18
The Sign of Being Dead ..... 19
Though Not Why ..... 20
Jesus, Man, Holder of Fiction ..... 21
The Shadow Sign ..... 22
The Village of Fish ..... 23
The Lost Law ..... 24
Just a Smudge ..... 26
Great New (Those Europeans \& Their Movies) ..... 27
The Red Light of the Sign ..... 28
The Latest Neuroses ..... 30
You Must Rise ..... 31
Broken Signs \& Numbers ..... 32
Notebook of Shapes
Pact ..... 37
Growth I ..... 38
The Little Secret Elephant ..... 39
Trick-Moth ..... 40
Women of the Sky ..... 4I
The Ridiculous Shape of Longing ..... 42
The Egg ..... 43
The Man Who Leaves ..... 44
Superstition Sonnet (Child's Toy) ..... 45
Mr Popa's Little Box ..... 46
The Hay Mountain ..... 47
The Mirage (W.C.W - G.B.S - M.T.C) ..... 49
Mr Skinnyfingers ..... 50
What Makes Your Pig's Leg Bigger? ..... 5I
The Fence ..... 52
Opening Massacre ..... 54
For \& Against Games ..... 56
I Had Thought ..... 57
New Shape ..... 58
The Shape of Things to Come ..... 59
Notebook of Nerves
Spine-Scar ..... 63
The Science of Birds' Nests ..... 64
Sweet Egg ..... 65
Nice Eel ..... 66
Bucket ..... 67
The Pick-Up ..... 68
There Were Mumbled ..... 69
The Moon Full ..... 71
My Dream ..... 72
The Innumerable ..... 73
Project Seahorse ..... 74
I4 Luxurious Options ..... 76
Nest ..... 78
The Laughing Pain ..... 79
Acting Alone and in Silence ..... 8I
Sooted ..... 82
Unflawed ..... 83
Converting a Diploma to a Degree ..... 84
My Own Agnès (Recent Without Criticism) ..... 85
When the Bones Cry ..... 86

## Notebook of Sand

When Things Considered the End ..... 89
Sleep is Earthly ..... 90
Get Going Grains ..... 91
Because There Isn't Us ..... 92
My Own Judge ..... 93
The Bats Are Out ..... 94
This Horse ..... 95
Skeleton Food ..... 97
Don't Tell Me ..... 98
The Body ..... 99
The World Spills ..... IOO
Scarecroak ..... IOI
Snorky Tato ..... 102
The Little Box of Sand ..... 103
Fewsday ..... 104
Let Life ..... 106
No Museum (Renunciation) ..... 107
Intimates of the Deceased ..... Io8
Whistling Up a Storm for Strangers ..... 109
When Things Ended ..... IIO

# How are notebooks <br> born? Who throws blue lines into them. 

Tomaž Šalamun<br>'Moss'

> The arrow touches a thing in the night that becomes its target we are a sense hungry for signs.

Michel Deguy

'Arrêts fréquents'

Notebook of Signs

Poetry is signs of signlessness.

Jack Anders
'Playing in the Sandbox'

## Signs of a Time

We wore hats and gloves.
What might induce hankering, humour or horseplay. Gloves without hands.
All a now thing.
Rice grew in our hair - nightly.
Squashing, crushing, squashing.
We were identifiable by our myelin sheaths of silver.
You are slung.
By the bug of the world that crawled over us.
Lie down with ice.
Frozen black feet.
The disaster is happening inside your head always.
With a head like what eyes don't see.
The world slurs to focus.
Unfocusable until the time is over.
Through your mouth.

## The Three-Week Goat

For twenty-one days
the rocks made a mountain
Rue grew in clumps
under quivering noses
Three eagles - one who didn't belong eyed the circular lives of a horde of bees
A white flower
Yes, a white flower...
At the beginning of the fourth week entered the stomach of a thing with hooves which immediately entered the sky as if that other existence had depended on some sureness of foot on a certain view that had purely to do with reality's angle with its where-you-stand take on survival So a breeze continued its sightless journey down the slope A sheep in its second year, suddenly saw the ilex forest

## The Fragment Called Wisdom

There is a cracked stone
It is wise
There is a broken stick
It is wise
There is water, forever formless
always formed
It is wise
It is unwise
to shake the whole from its sack
of pieces
The head looks around at its new limbs and immediately starts telling them what to do

The earth falls
It is wise
The earth holds
It is wise
Where has the hand gone
which once showed the eyes
how to see the spine?

## The Swimming Pool is Broken

The swimming pool is broken.
They can't make it work.
One efficient warrior screams at it from the side.
No result.
The housewife tries ravishing in it.
Nothing.
The gondolier comes up with his little commuter boat.
The mermaid puts on her glove.
Three smelly clouds offer some suggestions.
It's all hot, narcotic, lush and uncertain.
No matter.
The pool remains inoperable.
There's talk about expense and meetings about waste.
These don't stop the inevitable.
They have to throw it away.
Someone gets a bag and bundles it up.
A long period of little satisfaction follows.
Eventually comes the suggestion of a flattish-topped raceme.
For several months of the year now there are squeals of delight.
(They'd learned about instead though.
And used something else in the vase.)

## Possible Cures for Beauty

Sleep faster.
Leave your memory in the war.
Love completely and perfectly.
With your poetry, override the moon.
Accompany the butterfly when it visits the flower.
Move remorse to the front of your stable.
Excise doubt from fiction.
Feast for a lifetime on the bite the ant took from the pear.
Keep trying close to your heart.
Remember that someone invented the violin.
Keep an eye out for stray heads with massive noses.
Gorge on the fluff of peace.
Feel happy and sad that nothing ever changes.
Treat fame like the ubiquitous spine of the soldier.
Rub someone in your eyes and split yourself open over a rock for them.
Reach the gamut and repeat repeat.
Shelter in isolation.
Fill your hollow flesh with things unproven.
On a clear night, look for a single star.
Leap up high cheekbones and jump!
Describe it.

## One Feather, One Stone

I'm sure Jesus<br>was born<br>in his beard<br>Born with<br>a feather<br>Born<br>a stone<br>Jesus could fly<br>Jesus could sink<br>He was an all-<br>round athlete

I'm sure Jesus
I'm sure
took the weight
of objects
a lot less seriously
than Isaac
Newton

## Blue Lines

for Tomaž Šalamun

Don't race to blue Wait for the piano and its baby hippopotami to leave the island for the sea

Don't break the line to find the dead sounds the not-born sounds The artist has sung on the high roof

See the castle switch off the horizon That's your house pulling magenta on lines from the sea

Throw lines into shimmer the fools and avoidance The little animals
will reward you
with other colours

## The Three-Dimensional Bush-Nest

the weight of a lilac sun
falls through the weather
into the three-dimensional bush-nest
small purples are born
violeta, efflatum, púrpura, ungu
they have no voices
but mouths which scream for justice
against the vestments in which
they were given birth
violeta, efflatum, púrpura, ungu
the bush squats by your hand and burns only once in the lifetime of every epoch

